
RIC: SIBBS S: THEOL: D: AVL: KATHARINÆ CANTAB: MAG: NEC NON HOSPITIO GRAI: A S: CONCIONIBVS.
Ætat: suæ 58.


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BOWELS OPENED,

OR,

A DISCOVERY OF THE Neere and deere Love, Vnion and *Communion betwixt Christ and the* Church, and consequently betwixt Him and every beleeving soule.

Delivered in divers Sermons on the Fourth Fifth and Sixt Chapters of the CANTICLES.

By that Reverend and Faithfull Minister of the Word, DOCTOR SIBS, late Preacher unto the Honourable Societie of *Grayes Inne*, and Master of Katharine Hall in Cambridge.

Being in part finished by his owne pen in his life time, and the rest of them perused and corrected by those whom he intrusted with the publishing of his works.

CANT. 4. 10.

Thou hast ravished my heart, my Sister, my Spouse: thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, and with one chaine of thy necke.

LONDON.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

HONORATISSIMO DOMINO,

DOMINO

EDVARDO *VICE-COMITI* MANDEVILLE

QVEM, VT

VERÆ NOBILITATIS DELICIAS CANDORIS NIVEM, IN RES *CHRISTI, ET* ALICRVM COMMODA EFFVSISSIMVM SUSPICIMUS, COLIMUS; *VNAQVE* CONCIONES HAS IN CANTICA POSTHVMAS

IN

AMORIS GRATIAM QVO AVTHOREM IPSE COMPLEXUS EST NOSTRÆQVE IN DNEM ILLIVS MERITISSIMÆ *OBSERVANTIÆ TESTIMONIUM*

D. D.

THOMAS GOODWIN.
PHILIPPVS NYE.


BRITISH MUSEUM

To the Christian Reader.

THE perusall of this Book being committed unto me by an ancient and a faithfull friend of mine, I found it (I confesse) so full of heavenly treasure, and such lively expressions of the unvaluable riches of the love of Christ towards all his poore servants that sue and seek unto him, that I sent unto the godly and learned Author, earnestly intreating him to publish the same, judging it altogether unmeete that so precious matter should be concealed from publike use. When he excused himselfe by undervaluing his owne meditations: but, withall signified his desire of the Churches good, if by any thing in his works it might never so little be promoted, I could not but declare my selfe in recommending this Treatise, as a very profitable and excellent help

both to the understanding of that dark and most divine Scrip ure, and also to kindle in the heart all heavenly affections unto Iesus Christ.

It is well knowne how backward I am, and ever have been to cumber the Presse, but yet I would not be guilty in depriving the deare children of God of the spirituall and sweet consolations, which are heere very plentifully offered unto them.

And the whole frame of all these Sermons, is carried with such Wisdome, Gravity, Piety, Iudgment and Experience, that it commends it self unto all that are godly wise: and I doubt not but that they shall finde their temptations answered, their fainting spirits revived, their understandings inlightned, and their graces confirmed, so as they shall have cause to praise God for the worthy Authors godly and painfull labours. And thus desiring the Father of all mercies, and the God of all comfort, to blesse this work to the consolation & edification of those that seek his favour and desire to feare his holy Name, I rest

Thine in Iesus Christ

I. Dod.

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SERMON I.

CANT. V. I.

I am comē into my Garden, my Siſter, my Spouſe, I have eaten my honey-combe with my honey: I have drunke my wine with my milke; eat O friends, Drinke, yea drinke abundantly, O Beloved!

OTher bookes of *Salomon* lie more obvious and open to common underſtanding; but, as none entered into the *Holy of Holies*, but the *High Prieſt*, ſo none can enter into the myſtery of this *Song of Songs*, but ſuch as have more neare Communion with *Chriſt*. *Songs*, and ſpecially *Mariage-Songs*, ſerve to expreſſe mens owne *Ioyes*, and others

Introduction.

Levit.

others praiſes. So, this *Booke* containes

The Mutuall loyes, and Mutuall Praiſes betwixt Chriſt and his Church.

And as *Chriſt* and his *Church*, are the greateſt perſons that partake of humane nature, ſo whatſoever is excellent in the whole world, is borrowed to ſet out the excellencies of theſe two great Lovers.

It is called *Salomons Song*, who next unto *Chriſt*, was the greateſt Sonne of *wiſdome* that ever the *Church* bred: whoſe underſtanding, as it was large as the ſand of the Sea, ſo his Affections, eſpecially that of *Love*, was as large: as we may ſee by his many wives, and by the delight he ſought to take in whatſoever nature could afford. Which affection of *Love* in him miſplaced, had beene his undoing, but that he was one beloved of God; who by his Spirit raiſed his ſoule to lovely Objects of a higher Nature. Here in this argument there is no danger for the deepeſt wit, or the largeſt affection (yea of a *Salomon*) to over-reach: for the knowledge of the love of *Chriſt* to his *Church*, is above all knowledge, The *Angels* themſelves may admire it, though they cannot comprehend it. It may well therefore be called the *Song of Salomon*; The moſt excellent *Song*, of a man of the higheſt conceit, and deepeſt apprehenſion, and of the higheſt matters, *The Intercourſe betwixt Chriſt the Higheſt Lord of Lords, and his beſt beloved contracted Spouſe.*

Eph 3.19.

There are diverſe things in this *Song*, that a corrupt

corrupt heart (unto which all things are defiled) may take offence; But, *To the pure all things are pure.* Such a ſinfull abuſe of this Heavenly Booke is farre from the intention of the Holy Ghoſt in it, which is by ſtouping low to us, to take advantage to raiſe us higher unto him; that by taking advantage of the ſweeteſt paſſage of our life (*Mariage*) and the moſt delightfull affection (*Love*) in the ſweeteſt manner of Expreſſion (*by a Song*) he might carrie up the Soule to things of a Heavenly Nature. We ſee in *Summer*, that one heat weakens another: and a great light being neare a little one, drawes away and obſcures the flame of the other: ſo it is when the affections are taken up higher to their fit Object, they die unto all earthly things, whilſt that heavenly flame conſumes and waſts all baſe affections and earthly deſires. Amongſt other wayes of *Mortification*, there be two remarkable,

Simile.

Simile.

Two especiall wayes of Mortification.

1. *By imbittering all earthly things unto us, whereby the Affections are deaded to them.*
2. *By ſhewing more noble, excellent, and fit Objects.*

That the ſoule iſſuing more largely and ſtrongly into them, may be diverted; and ſo by degrees die unto other things. The holy Spirit hath choſen this way in this *Song*; by elevating and raiſing our *affections* and *love*, to take it off from other things, that ſo it might runne in its right Channell. It is pitie that a ſweet ſtreame ſhould not rather run into a *Garden*, than into a puddle: what a ſhame is it, that man having in him ſuch excel-

lent affections as *Love*, *Ioy*, *Delight*, ſhould cleave to dirty baſe things that are worſe than himſelfe, ſo becomming debaſed like them? Therefore the Spirit of God, out of mercy and pitie to man, would raiſe up his affections, by taking compariſon from earthly things leading to higher matters, that onely deſerve *Love*, *Ioy*, *Delight*, and *Admiration*. Let Gods ſtouping to us, occaſion our riſing up unto him; for, here the greateſt things, The *Myſtery* of *Myſteries*, the *Communion* betwixt *Chriſt* and his *Church*, is ſet out in the familiar compariſon of a *Marriage*: that ſo we might the better ſee it in the glaſſe of a compariſon, which we cannot ſo directly conceive of, as we may ſee the *Sun* in water, whoſe beames we cannot ſo directly looke upon: Onely our care muſt be, not to looke ſo much on the *colours*, as the *Picture*: and not ſo much on the Picture, as on the *Perſon* it ſelfe repreſented: that we looke not ſo much to the *reſemblance*, as to the *Perſon reſembled*.

Simile.

Some would have *Salomon* by a *Spirit of Prophecie*, to take a view here of all the time, from his Age to the ſecond coming of Chriſt: and in this *Song*, as in an abridgement, to ſet downe the ſeverall *Paſſages* and *Periods* of the *Church*, in ſeverall ages, as containing diverſe things which are more correſpondent to one age of the *Church* than another. But howſoever this *Song* may containe (we deny not) *A ſtory of the Church in ſeverall ages*: yet this hinders not, but that *moſt paſſages of it agrees to the Spirituall eſtate of the Church in every age*:

as

as most Interpreters have thought. In this *Song* there is

1. *A strong desire of the Church of nearer Communion with Christ*: and then
2. *Some declining againe in affection.*
3. *After this we have Her recovery and regaining againe of Love*: after which
4. *The Church fals againe into a declining of Affection, whereupon followes a further strangenesse of Christ to her, than before*: which continues, untill
5. *That the Church perceiving of Christs constant affection unto her, notwithstanding her unkind dealing, recovers and cleaves faster to Christ, than ever before.* Chap. 3.

These passages agree to the Experience of the best Christians in the state of their owne lives. This Observation must carrie strength through this whole *Song*, That, *there is the same regard of the whole Church, & of every particular member in regard of the chiefest Priviledges and Graces that accompany salvation.* There is the same reason of every drop of water, as of the whole *Ocean* all is water; and of every sparke of fire, as of the whole Element of fire, all is fire: of those Homogeneall bodies, as we cal them, there is the same respect of the part and of the whole. *And therefore as the whole Church is the Spouse of Christ, so is every particular Christian: and as the whole Church desires still nearer Communion with Christ, so doth every particular member.* But to come to the words.

An Observation for the whole Song.

I am come into my Garden, &c.

This *Chapter* is not ſo well broken and divided from the former as it might have beene; for, it were better and more conſequent, that the laſt Verſe of the former *Chapter* were added to the beginning of this.

CANT. IV. XVI.

Awake, O North-wind, and come thou South, blow upon my Garden, that the Spices thereof may flow out; let my Beloved come into his Garden, and eat his pleaſant fruits.

And therefore, by reaſon of connexion of this Chapter with the former Verſe, we will firſt ſpeake ſomwhat of it briefly, onely to make way for that which followes. The words containe

1. *A turning of Chriſts ſpeech to the winds to blow upon his Garden:* with the *End* why? *That the Spices thereof may flow out.*
2. *We have an invitation of Chriſt by the Church, to come into his Garden,* with the *End, To eat his pleaſant fruits.*

Queſt. It may be a Queſtion, whether this *Command* be *the words of Chriſt,* or, *the deſire of his Spouſe.*

Anſw. The words are ſpoken by *Chriſt,* becauſe he cals it (*My Garden*) and the *Church* after, invites him to eat of (*His*) *pleaſant fruits,* not of (Hers) yet the words may be likewiſe, *an anſwer, to a former ſecret deſire of the Church*; whereof the order is this. The *Church* being ſenſible of ſome deadneſſe of Spirit; ſecretly deſires ſome further quickening

quickening. *Christ* then answers those desires, by commanding the winds to blow upon her. For, ordinarily *Christ* first stirres up desires, and then, answers the desires of his owne Spirit, by further increase, as here.

Awake, thou North-wind, and come thou South, and blow upon my Garden, &c.

For the first Point named, we see here, that *Christ* sends forth his Spirit, with Command to all *meanes*, under the name of *North and South wind*, to further the fruitfulnesse of his *Church*. The wind is natures fanne, what *winds* are to the *Garden*, that the Spirit of *Christ*, in the use of meanes, is to the soule. From Comparison fetcht from Christs commanding the *winds*; we may in generall observe, That, *All Creatures stand in obedience to Christ, as ready at a word, whensoever he speakes to them.* They are all as it were asleepe untill he awakes them. He can call for the *wind* out of his treasures when he pleases, he holds them in his fist.

Observation from Christs commanding the winds.

Which may comfort all those that are *Christs*, that they are under one that hath all creatures at his becke under him, to do them service, and at his checke to do them no harme. This drew the *Disciples* in admiration to say, *What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the seas obey him?* And cannot the same power still the winds and waves of the *Churches* and *States*, and cause a sodaine calme, if (as the Disciples) we awake him with our Prayers.

Use.

Mat. 8. 27.

Secondly, we see here, that *Christ* speakes to *winds contrary one to another*, both in regard of the coasts from whence they blow, and in their quality: but both agree in this, that both are necessary for the *Garden*: where we see, That, *The courses that Christ takes, and the meanes that he uses with his Church, may seeme contrary, but by a wise ordering all agree in the wholsome issue.* A prosperous and an afflicted condition are contrary, a mild and a sharpe course may seeme to crosse one another. Yet, sweetly they agree in this, that as the *Church* needeth both, so *Christ* uses both for the *Churches* good. The *North* is a *nipping wind*, and the *South* a *cherishing wind*, therefore the *South-wind* is the welcomer and sweeter after the *North-wind* hath blowne. But howsoever, all things are ours, *Paul, Apollos, Cephas, things present and to come, life, death*, &c. *all things work together for good to us, being in Christ.*

Observation from the contrary blasts of winds.

1 Cor. 3. 21. Rom. 8. 28.

Use 1. Hence it is that the manifold wisdome of Christ maketh use of such variety of conditions, and hence it is that the Spirit *of Christ* is mild in some mens Ministeries, and sharpe in others. Nay, in the very same Minister, as the state of the soule they have to deale with all requires.

2. Sometimes againe, *the people of God need purging and sometimes refreshing*, whereupon the Spirit of God caries it selfe suitably to both conditions, and the Spirit in the godly themselves drawes good out of every condition, sure they are that all winds blow them good, and were it not for their good, no *winds* should blow upon them.

them. But in regard that these times of ours, by long peace and plenty, grow cold, heavy, and secure, we need therefore all kinds of *winds* to blow upon us, and all little enough. Time was when we were more quicke and lively, but now the heat of our spirits are abated; we must therefore take heed of it, and *quicken those things that are ready to die*, or els in stead of the *North* and *South-wind*, God will send an *East-wind* that shall drie up all, as it is, *Hos.* 13.15. Revel.

Againe, if *Christ* can raise or lay, bind up or let loose all kind of *winds* at his pleasure, then if meanes be wanting or fruitlesse; *It is he that sayes to the clouds, drop not; and to the winds, blow not.* Therefore, we must acknowledge him in want or plenty of meanes. The Spirit of *Christ* in the use of meanes is *a free agent*, sometimes blowes strongly, somtimes more mildly, somtimes not at all, no creature hath these *winds* in a bag at command, and therefore it is wisdome to yeeld to the gales of the Spirit, though in some other things (as *Salomon* observes) it may hinder to observe the *winds*, yet here it is necessary and profitable to observe the winds of the Spirit. 3. Eccles. 11.4.

Now for the cleare understanding of what we are to speak of, let us first observe

1. *Why the Spirit of God in the use of the meanes is compared to wind.* And then,
2. *Why the Church is compared to a Garden:* which shall be handled in the proper place.

But first for the *wind.* *In what Respects the Spirit of God is compared to wind.*

1. *The wind blaweth where it listeth*, as it is *Iob.* 3.8.

So

So the Spirit of God blowes freely, and openeth the heart of some, and powreth grace plentifully in them.

2. *The wind (especially the North-wind) hath a cleansing force*; so the Spirit of God purgeth our hearts *from dead works to serve the living God*; making us partakers of the divine nature, 2 *Pet.* 1.

3. *The wind dispersеth and scattereth clouds, and makes a serenity in the ayre.* So doth the Spirit dispersе such clouds as corruption and Satan raise up in the soule, that we may clearely see the face of God in Iesus *Christ.*

4. *The wind hath a cooling and a tempering quality, and tempers the distemper of nature:* as in some hot countries there be yearely Anniversarie winds which blow at certaine times in Summer, tempering the heat. So the Spirit of God allayeth the unnaturall heats of the soule in fierie Tentations, and bringeth it into a good temper.

5. *The wind being subtill searcheth into every corner and cranie.* So the Spirit likewise is of a searching nature, and discerneth betwixt the joynts and the marrow, betwixt the flesh and the Spirit, &c. searching those hidden corruptions, that nature could never have found out.

6. *The wind hath a cherishing and a fructifying force.* So the Spirit is a quickening and a cherishing Spirit, and maketh the heart which is as a barren wildernesse, to be fruitfull.

7. *The wind hath a conveying power of sweet smells*

in

in the ayre, to carry them from one to another. So the Spirit in the Word conveyeth the ſeeds of Grace and comfort from one to another, it drawes out what ſweetneſſe is in the ſpirits of men, and makes them fragrant and delightfull to others.

8. *The wind againe beares downe all before it, beats downe houſes, and trees like the Cedars in Lebanon,* turnes them up by the roots, and layes all flat. So the Spirit is mighty in operation, there is no ſtanding before it: It brings down mountaines, and every high thing that exalts it ſelfe, and layes them levell: nay, the *Roman* and thoſe other mighty Empires could not ſtand before it.

For theſe reſpects and the like the *blowing of the Spirit* is compared to *wind.* For which end Chriſt here commands the winds to

Blow upon his Garden.

[*To blow,* &c.] See here the order, linking and concatination of things one under another, to the proſpering of a poore flower or plant in a *Garden*; not onely ſoyle is needfull, but ayre and wind alſo, and the influence of Heaven: and God commanding all, as here, the *winds* to *Blow upon his Garden.* To this end as a wonderfull mercy to his people, it is ſaid *Hoſ.* 2. 22. *And it ſhall come to paſſe in that day, I will heare ſaith the Lord, I will heare the Heavens, and they ſhall heare the earth, and the earth ſhall heare the corne, the wine, and the oyle; and they ſhall heare Iezreel.* As the Creatures are from

from God, ſo the order and dependance of creatures one from another: to teach us, not onely what to pray for, but alſo what to pray fitly for. Not onely to pray for the deaw of heaven, but alſo for ſeaſonable and cheriſhing winds. *It is not the ſoyle, but the ſeaſon that makes fruitfull*; and that from ſeaſonable winds and influences. So, *In ſpirituall things there is a Chaine of Cauſes* and *Effects*; *Prayer* comes from *Faith*, *Rom.* 10.14. *Faith* from the *Hearing* of the Word, *Hearing* from a *Preacher*; by whom God by his Spirit blowes upon the heart: and a *Preacher* from *Gods ſending*. If the God of Nature ſhould but hinder and take away one linke of natures chaine, the whole frame would be diſturbed. Well, That which *Chriſt* commands here, is for the winds to

Non ager ſed annus facit fructus.

Blow upon his Garden.

In what Reſpects we need the blowing of the Spirit.

And we need blowing, our ſpirits will be becalmed els, and ſtand at a ſtay, and Satan will be ſure by himſelfe and ſuch as are his bellowes, to blow up the ſeeds of ſinfull luſts in us. For, there are two ſpirits in the *Church*, the one alwayes blowing againſt the other. Therefore, the beſt had need to be ſtirred up, otherwiſe with *Moſes*, their hands will be ready to fall down, and abate in their affection. Therefore we need *Blowing*,

Exod. 17. 12.

1. *In regard of our naturall inhability.*
2. *In regard of our dulneſſe and heavines cleaving to nature occaſionally.*
3. *In regard of contrary winds from without*, Sathan hath his bellows filled with his ſpirit, that

hinders the work of grace all they can, so that we need not onely *Christs blowing*, but also his stopping other *contrary winds*, that they blow not, *Rev.*7.1.

4. *In regard of the estate and condition of the new Covenant*, wherein all beginning, growth, and ending, is from *Grace*, and nothing but *Grace*.

5. *Because old Grace, without a fresh supply, will not hold against new crosses and tentations.*

Use. Therefore when *Christ* drawes let us run after him, when he *blowes*, let us open unto him, *It may be the last blast that ever we shall have from him.* And let us set upon Duties with this Incouragement, that *Christ* will *blow* upon us, not onely to prevent us, but also to maintaine his owne Graces in us. But O! where is this stirring up of our selves, and one another upon these grounds?

Quest. Answ. But, *Why is the Church compared to a Garden?* Christ herein takes all manner of termes to expresse himselfe and the state of the Church, as it is to him, to shew us that whersoever we are, we may have occasion of heavenly thoughts, to raise up our thoughts to higher matters. His Church is his *Temple*, when we are in the *Temple*, it is a *field* when we are there; A *Garden*, if we walke in a *Garden*: It is also a *Spouse* and a *Sister*; &c. But more particularly the *Church* is resembled to a *Garden*,

In what respects the Church is compared to a garden.

1. *Because a Garden is taken out of the common waste ground, to be appropriated to a more particular use*; so the *Church* of *Christ* is taken out of the wilderness

wilderneſſe of this waſt world, to a particular
Exod. 9. 26. uſe. It is in reſpect of the reſt, as *Goſhen* to *Egypt*, wherein light was, when all elſe was in darkneſſe. And indeed wherein doth the *Church* differ from other grounds, but that *Chriſt* hath taken it in? It is the ſame ſoyle as other grounds are; but, he dreſſeth and fits it to beare ſpices and herbes.

2 2. *In a garden nothing comes up naturally of it ſelfe*, but as it is planted and ſet: ſo nothing is good in the heart, but as it is planted and ſet by the heavenly Husbandman. We need not ſow
Iohn 15. 22. the wildernes, for the ſeeds of weeds proſper naturally, the earth is a mother to weeds, but a ſtepmother to herbs. So weeds & paſſions grow too rank naturally, but nothing growes in the *Church* of it ſelf, but as it is ſet by the hand of *Chriſt*, who is the Author, Dreſſer, and Pruner of his Garden.

3 Againe, *In a Garden nothing uſes to be planted but what is uſefull and delightfull*, ſo there is no grace in the heart of a Chriſtian, but it is uſefull (as occaſion ſerves) both to God and man.

4 Further, *In a garden there are variety of flowers and ſpices*; eſpecially in thoſe hot Countries; ſo in a Chriſtian, there is ſomewhat of every grace: as ſome cannot heare of a curious flower, but they will have it in their *Garden*, ſo a Chriſti-
Simile. cannot heare of any Grace; but he labours to obtaine it, they labour for graces for all ſeaſons, and occaſions. They have for *Proſperity*, *temperance and ſobriety*; for *Adverſity*, *patience* and *hope* to ſuſtaine them. For thoſe that are *above them*, they have *Reſpect* and *Obedience*; and for thoſe

under

under them, ſutable uſage in all conditions of Chriſtianity. For the Spirit of God in them is a ſeminary of ſpirituall good things; as in the corruption of nature, before the Spirit of God came to us, there was the ſeminary of all ill weeds in us, ſo when there is a new quality and new principles put in us, there with comes the ſeeds of all graces. *Reaſon.*

Againe, *Of all other Places, we moſt delight in our Gardens to walk there and take our pleaſure,* and take care thereof, for fencing, weeding, watering, and planting. So *Chriſts* chiefe care and delight is for his *Church*: he walks in the midſt of the *ſeven golden Candleſtickes*: and if he defend and protect States, it is that they may be a harbour to his *Church.* 5 Revel. 2. 1.

And then againe, as in Gardens there had wont to have *Fountaines* and *ſtreames* which run through their *Gardens*: as *Paradiſe* had foure *ſtreames* which ran through it. So the *Church* is *Chriſts Paradiſe*, and his Spirit is a ſpring in the midſt of it, to refreſh the ſoules of his upon all their faintings, and ſo the ſoule of a Chriſtian becomes as a *watered Garden.* 6

So alſo, *Their Fountaines were ſealed up*; ſo the joyes of the *Church* and particular Chriſtians, are as it were ſealed up; *A ſtranger* (it is ſaid) *ſhall not meddle with this joy of the Church.* 7 Cant. 4. 12.

Laſtly, *A garden ſtands alwayes in need of weeding and dreſſing*; continuall labour and coſt muſt be beſtowed upon it; ſomtimes planting, pruning and weeding, &c. So in the *Church* and hearts 8 Pro. 14. 10.

hearts of Chriſtians, *Chriſt* hath alwayes ſomewhat to do, we would els ſoone be over-growne and turne wild: In all which, and the like reſpects, *Chriſt* calleth upon the *winds to blow upon his Garden.*

Uſe 1. If then the *Church* be a ſevered portion, then, *We ſhould walke as men of a ſevered condition from the world*, not as men of the world, but as Chriſtians, to make good that we are ſo, by feeling the graces of Gods Spirit in ſome comfortable meaſure, that ſo *Chriſt* may have ſomthing in us, that he may delight to dwell with us, ſo to be ſubject to his pruning and dreſſing. For, *It is ſo far from being an ill ſigne, that Chriſt is at coſt with us, in following us with afflictions, that it is rather a ſure ſigne of his love.* For, the care of this bleſſed Husbandman is to prune us ſo, as to make us fruitfull. Men care not for heath and wilderneſſe whereupon they beſtow no coſt. So when God prunes us by croſſes and afflictions, and ſowes good ſeed in us, it is a ſigne, he meanes to dwell with us, and delight in us.

2 And then alſo, we ſhould not ſtrive ſo much for common liberties of the world that common people delight in, but for peculiar graces, that God may delight in us as his *Garden.*

3 And then, let us learne hence, *not to deſpiſe any nation or perſon*, ſeeing God can take out of the waſt wilderneſſe whom he will, and make the *Deſart* an *Eden.*

4 Againe, let us bleſſe God for our ſelves, that our lot hath fallen into ſuch a pleaſant place,

to

to be planted in the *Church* the place of Gods delight.

And this alſo ſhould move us, *to be fruitfull*, for men will indure a fruitleſſe tree in the waſt wilderneſſe, but in their garden who will indure it? *Dignity ſhould mind us of duty.* It is ſtrange to be fruitleſſe and barren in this place that we live in, being watered with the deaw of Heaven, under the ſweet influence of the meanes. This fruitleſſe eſtate being often watered from heaven, how fearefully is it threatned by the Holy Ghoſt? that *it is neare unto curſing and burning.* For in this caſe, viſible *Churches*, if they proſper not, God will remove the hedge, and lay them waſt, having a *Garden* elſwhere. Sometimes Gods plants proſper better in *Babylon*, than in *Iudea*. It is to be feared God may complaine of us, as he doth of his people, *Ier.2.21. I have planted thee a noble vine, how art thou then come to be degenerated?* If in this caſe we regard iniquity in our heart, the Lord will not regard the beſt thing that comes from us, as our prayers, *Heb.12.18. Heb.13.* We muſt then learne of himſelfe, how and wherein to pleaſe him, obedience from a broken heart is the beſt ſacrifice. Marke in Scriptures what he abhors, what he delights in: we uſe to ſay of our friends, would God I knew how to pleaſe them: *Chriſt* teacheth us, that *without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe him.* Let us then ſtrive and labour to be fruitfull in our *Places* and *Callings*: for it is the greateſt honour in this world, for God to digni-

5

Heb.6.8.

Heb.11.6.

Hoſ.10.1.

fie us with ſuch a condition, as to make us fruitfull. *We muſt not bring forth fruit to our ſelves*, as GOD complaines of *Ephraim*. *Honour*, *Riches*, and the like, are but ſecondary things, arbitrary at Gods pleaſure to caſt in: but, *to have an active heart fruitfull from this ground, that God hath planted us for this purpoſe, that we may doe good to mankind, this is an excellent conſideration not to profane our calling.* The bleſſed man is ſaid to be, *a tree planted by the water ſide, that brings forth fruit in due ſeaſon*; but it is not every fruit: not that fruit which *Moſes* complaines of, *Deut.* 32. 32. *The wine of Dragons, and the Gall of Aſpes:* but good fruit, as *Iohn* ſpeakes: *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewen downe, and caſt into the fire.*

Mat.3.10.

6 Laſtly, in that the *Church* is called *Chriſts Garden*, this may ſtrengthen our faith in Gods care and protection. The *Church* may ſeeme to lie open to all incurſions, but it hath an inviſible hedge about it, a *wall* without it, and a *well* within it. God himſelfe is *a wall of fire about it*, and his Spirit a well of living waters running through it to refreſh and comfort it. As it was ſaid of *Canaan*, ſo it may be ſaid of the *Church*; *The eye of the Lord is upon it all the yeare long*, and he waters it continually. From which eſpeciall care of Gods over it, this is a good plea for us to God, *I am thine, ſave me*, I am a plant of thine owne ſetting, nothing is in me but what is thine, therefore cheriſh what is thine. So, for the whole

Zach.2.5.

Rev.22.1.

Church

Church the plea is good; the *Church* is thine, fence it, water it, defend it, keep the wild bore out of it. Therefore the enemies thereof ſhall one day know what it is to make a breach upon Gods vineyard. In the meane time, let us labour to keep our hearts as a *Garden*, that nothing that defileth may enter. In which reſpects the *Church* is compared to a *Garden*, upon which *Chriſt* commands the *North* and *South-wind* (all the meanes of Grace) *to blow.*

But to what end muſt theſe winds blow upon the Garden?

That the Spices thereof may flow out.

The *End* of this *blowing* is you ſee, *That the Spices thereof may flow out*; good things in us lie dead and bound up, unleſſe the Spirit let them out. *We ebb and flow, open and ſhut, as the Spirit blowes upon us*; *without blowing, no flowing.* There were gracious good things in the *Church*, but they wanted *blowing* up and further ſpreading, whence we may obſerve, That,

Obſerv. *We need not onely grace to put life into us at the firſt, but likewiſe grace to quicken and draw forth that grace that we have.* This is the difference betwixt mans *blowing* and the Spirits; man when he *blowes* (if grace be not there before) ſpends all his labour upon a dead coale, which he cannot make take fire. But the Spirit firſt kindles a holy fire, and then increaſes the flame. *Chriſt* had in the uſe of meanes wrought on the *Church* before, and now further promoteth his owne worke. We muſt firſt take in, and then ſend out; firſt be

ciſternes to containe; and then, conduits to convey. The *wind* firſt *blowes*, and then the *Spices* of the *Church flow out*; *we are firſt ſweet in our ſelves, and then ſweet to others.*

Obſerv. Whence we ſee further, That, *It is not enough to be good in our ſelves, but our goodneſſe muſt flow out*: that is, grow more ſtrong, uſefull to continue and ſtreame forth for the good of others. We muſt labour to be (as was ſaid of *Iohn*) *burning and ſhining Chriſtians*: for *Chriſt* is not like a boxe of oyntment ſhut up and not opened, but like that boxe of oyntment that *Mary* powred out, which perfumes all the whole houſe with the ſweetneſſe thereof. For, the Spirit is herein like *wind*: it carries the ſweet ſavour of grace to others. A Chriſtian ſo ſoone as he finds any rooting in God, is of a ſpreading diſpoſition, and makes the places he lives in the better for him. The whole body is the better for every good member; as we ſee in *Oneſimus*. Philem. 10. The meaneſt perſons when they become good, are uſefull and profitable; of briers become flowers, the very naming of a good man caſts a ſweet ſavour, as preſenting ſome grace to the heart of the hearer. For, *then we have what we have to purpoſe; when others have occaſion to bleſſe God for us, for conveying comfort to them by us.* And for our furtherance herein, therefore, the *winds* are called upon to *awake and blow upon Chriſt's Garden*,

That the Spices thereof may flow out.

Obſerv. Hence we ſee alſo, That, *Where once God begins,*

begins, he goes on, and delights to add incouragement to incouragement, to maintaine new setters up in Religion: and doth not onely give them a ſtocke of grace at the beginning, but alſo helpes them to trade; He is not onely *Alpha*, but *Omega* unto them: The *Beginning* and the *Ending*. He doth not onely plant graces, but alſo watereth and cheriſheth them; where the Spirit of Chriſt is, it is an incouraging Spirit. For, not onely it infuſeth grace, but alſo ſtirres it up, that we may be ready prepared for every good worke, otherwiſe, we cannot do that which we are able to do, the Spirit muſt bring all into exerciſe, els, the habits of grace will lie aſleep; we need a preſent Spirit to do every good: not only the power to will, but the will it ſelfe: and not onely the will, but the deed is from the Spirit. Which ſhould ſtirre us up to go to *Chriſt*, that he may ſtirre up his owne graces in us, that they may flow out. *Obſerv.* Rev. 1. 8.

Let us labour then in our ſelves to be full of goodneſſe, that ſo we may be fitted to do good to all: as God is good and does good to all, ſo muſt we ſtrive to be as like him as may be. In which caſe for others ſakes, we muſt pray, that God would make the *winds* to blow out fully upon us, *That our ſpices may flow out* for their good. For a Chriſtian in his right temper thinks, that he hath nothing good to purpoſe, but that which does good to others. Thus farre of *Chriſts* Command to the *North* and *South-wind to awake and blow upon his Garden, That the ſpices thereof may flow out.* In the next place we have *Uſe.*

2. *Christs Invitation by the Church to come into his Garden.* With the *End* thereof, *To eat his pleasant Fruits.*

Which words shew, *The Churches further desire of Christs presence to delight in the graces of his owne Spirit in her.* She invites him to come and take delight in the Graces of his owne Spirit. And she cals him *Beloved*, because all her love is, or should be imparted and spent on *Christ*, who gave himselfe to a cursed death for her. Our love should run in strength no other way, therefore the *Church* cals *Christ* her *Beloved*. *Christ* was there before, but she desires a further presence of him; whence we may observe, That,

Observ. *Whereſoever grace is truely begun and stirred up, there is still a further desire of Christs presence*, and approaching daily more and more neare to the soule, the *Church* thinkes him never neare enough to her, untill shee bee in heaven with him. The true *Spouse* and the *Bride* alwayes (unlesse in desertion and temptation) cryeth, *Come Lord Iesus, Come quickly.* Rev. 22. 17. Now these degrees of *Christs* approaches to the soule untill his Second Comming are; that he may manifest himselfe more and more in defending, comforting and inabling his *Church* with Grace; every further manifestation of his presence, is a further Comming.

Reas. 1. But why is the *Church* thus earnest?

First, because grace helps to see our need of *Christ*, and so helps us to prize him the more; which

which high esteeme breeds an hungring earnest desire after him, and a desire of further likenesse and sutableness to him.

Secondly, because the *Church* well knowes, that when *Christ* comes to the soule, he comes not alone, but with his Spirit, and his Spirit with abundance of peace and comfort. This shee knowes what need she hath of his Presence, that without him there is no comfortable living. For, wheresoever he is, he makes the soule a kind of Heaven, and all conditions of life comfortable.

Hence we may see that those that do not desire the presence of *Christ* in his Ordinances, are (it is to be feared) such as the *wind* of the Holy Ghost never blew upon. There are some of such a disposition, as they cannot indure the presence of *Christ*: such as *Antichrist* and his limms, whom the presence of *Christ* in his Ordinances blasts and consumes. Such are not onely profane and worldly persons, but proud hypocrites who glory in something of their owne, and therefore their hearts rise against *Christ* and his Ordinances, as laying open, and shaming their emptinesse and carnalnesse. The Spirit in the *Spouse* is alwayes saying to *Christ*, *come*. It hath never enough of him, he was now in a sort present; But the *Church* (after it is once *blowen upon*) is not satisfied without a further presence. It is from the Spirit, that we desire more of the Spirit, and from the presence of *Christ*, that we desire a further Presence and Communion with Him. Now

Use.

The end and Reason why Christ is desired by the Church to come into his Garden, Is,

[*To eat his pleasant fruits.*] that is, to give him contentment. And is it not fit that *Christ* should eat the fruit of his owne vine, have comfort of his owne *Garden*, to taste of his owne fruits? The onely delight *Christ* hath in the world, is in his *Garden*: and that he might take the more delight in it, he makes it fruitfull, and those fruits are precious fruits, as growing from plants set by his owne hand, relishing of his owne Spirit, and so fitted for his taste. Now the *Church* knowing what fitted *Christs* taste best, and knowing the fruits of grace in her heart: desireth that *Christ* would delight in his own graces in her, and kindly accept of what she presented him with. Whence we see, That,

Observ. *A gracious heart is privy to its owne grace and sincerity, when it is in a right temper: and so farre as it is privy, is bold with Christ in a sweet and reverend manner.* So much sincerity, so much confidence, If our heart condemne us not of unsincerity, we may in a reverend manner speake boldly to *Christ*: It is not fit there should be strangenesse betwixt *Christ* and his *Spouse*; neither indeed will there be, when *Christ* hath *blowen* upon her, and when she is on the growing hand.

But marke the Order.

First, *Christ blowes*, and then the *Church* sayes, *Come*: *Christ* begins in love, then love drawes love;

love; *Christ* drawes the *Church*, and she runs after him. *The fire of love melts more than the fire of affliction.* Cant. 1. 4.

Againe, we may see here in the *Church* a carefulnesse to please *Christ*; as it is the duty, so it is the disposition of the *Church* of *Christ* to please her Husband.

The Reason is, First, our happinesse stands in his contentment, and all cannot but be well in that house, where the husband and the wife delight in, and make much of each other. *Reason* 1.

And againe, after that the *Church* hath denied her selfe and the vanities of the world, entring into a way and course of mortification, whom els hath she to give her selfe to, or receive contentment from. Our manner is to study to please men whom we hope to rise by, being carefull that all we do may be well taken of them: as for *Christ*, we put him off with any thing: If he likes it, so it is; if not, it is the best that he is like to have. 2

O let us take the Apostles counsell, *Coloss.* 1. 1. *To labour to walk worthy of the Lord*, &c. *unto all well-pleasing, increasing in knowledge, and fruitfulnesse in every good worke.* And this knowledge must not onely be a generall wisdome in knowing truths, but a speciall understanding of his good will to us, and our speciall duties againe to him. 1 Coloss. 1. 9, 10

Againe, that we may please *Christ* the better, labour to be cleansed from that which is offensive to him: let the spring be cleane. Therefore the *Psalmist* desiring that the words of his mouth 2

and

and the meditations of his heart might be acceptable before God, first begs *cleansing from his secret sinnes.*

Psal. 19. 12.

3 And still we must remember that he himselfe must worke in us, whatsoever is well-pleasing in his sight, that so we may be perfect in every good thing to do his will, having grace whereby we may serve him acceptably. And one prevailing argument with him is, that we desire to be such as he may take delight in, *The upright are his delight.* It cannot but please him when we desire grace, for this end that we may please him. If we study to please men in whom there is but little good; should we not much more study to please Christ the fountaine of goodnesse? Labour therefore to be spirituall, for *to be carnally minded is death,* and *those that are in the flesh cannot please God.*

Rom. 8. 6.

Observ. The *Church desires Christ to come into his Garden, to eat his pleasant fruits.* Where we see, *The Church gives all to Christ*: The *Garden* is his, the *Fruit* his, the *pleasantnesse* and *preciousnesse* of the *Fruit* is his. And as the fruits please him, so the humble acknowledgement that they come from him, doth exceedingly please him. It is enough for us to have the comfort, let him have the glory. It came from a good Spirit in *David*, when he said, *Of thine owne Lord I give thee*, &c. God accounts the works and fruits that comes from us to be ours, because the judgement and resolution of will, whereby we do them is ours. This he doth to incourage us, but because the grace whereby we judge and will aright comes from God,

2 Chron.

God, it is our duty to ascribe whatsoever is good in us, or comes from us, unto him: so God shall lose no praise, and we lose no incouragement. The imperfections in well-doing are onely ours, and those *Christ* will pardon, as knowing how to beare with the infirmities of his Spouse, being *the weaker vessell.*

This therefore should cheere up our spirits, in the wants and blemishes of our performances. *Use.* They are notwithstanding, precious fruits in *Christs* acceptance, so that we desire to please him above all things, and to have nearer communion with him: *fruitfulnes unto pleasingnes may stand with imperfections*, so that we be sensible of them, and ashamed for them. Although the fruit be little, yet it is precious, there is a blessing in it. Imperfections help us against tentations to pride, not to be matter of discouragement, which Satan aimes at. And as Christ commands the *North* and *South-wind* to *blow* for cherishing, so Satan labours to stirre up an *East* pinching *wind*, to take either from indeavour, or to make us heartlesse in indeavour. Why should we think basely of that which *Christ* thinks precious? Why should we thinke that offensive which he counts as incense? We must not give false witnesse of the work of grace in our hearts, but blesse God that he will work any thing in such polluted hearts as ours. What though as they come from us they have a relish of the old man, seeing he takes them from us, *and perfumes them with his own sweet odors*, Rev. 8. 3. so presents them unto God. He is our *High Priest*

Priest which makes all acceptable, both *Persons*, *Prayers*, and *Performances*, sprinkling them all with his blood.

Heb. 9. 13.

To conclude this Point, let it be our study to be in such a condition wherein we may please *Christ*; and whereas we are daily prone to offend him, let us daily renew our covenant with Him, and in him: and fetch incouragements of well-doing from this, that what we do, is not onely well-pleasing unto him, but rewarded of him. And to this end desire him, that he would give command to *North and South*, to all sort of meanes, to be effectuall, for making us more fruitfull, that he may delight in us as his pleasant *Gardens*; and then what is in the world, that we need much care for, or feare?

Now upon the *Churches Invitation* for *Christ* to come into his *Garden*, followes *His gracious Answer* unto the *Churches Desire*, in the first *Verse* of this *fift Chapter*.

CANT. V. I.

I am come into my Garden, my Sister, my Spouse, I have gathered my myrrhe with my spice, I have eaten my honey-combe with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milke; eat O friends, drinke, yea drinke abundantly, O beloved.

Which words containe in them

An answer to the Desire of the Church, in the latter part of the Verse formerly handled: Awake thou North-wind, and come thou South, &c.

Then,

Then *Vers.* 2. is set forth *The secure estate of the Church* at this time, *I sleepe, but my heart waketh*, in setting downe whereof the Holy Ghost here by *Salomon* shewes likewise

The loving Intercourse betwixt Christ and the Church one with another.

Now *Christ* upon the secure estate and condition of the *Church* desires her, *To open unto him, Ver.* 2. Which desire and waiting of *Christs* is put off and sleighted with poore and slender excuses, *Verse* 3. *I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on*, &c.

The *successe* of which excuses is, that *Christ* seems to go away from her (and indeed to her sight and sense departs) *Ver.* 6. *I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawen himselfe*, &c. whereupon she layes about her, is restlesse, and inquires after *Christ* from the *watchmen*, who misuse, *wound her, and take away her veile from her, Vers.* 7.

Another Intercourse in this *Chapter* here is, That *the Church for all this gives not over searching after Christ:* But askes the *Daughters of Ierusalem*, what was become of her *Beloved*, *Vers.* 8. and withall, in a few words, but full of large expression, she relates her case unto them; That *she was sicke of love:* and so *chargeth them to tell her beloved; If they find him.* Where upon a *Question* moved by them, touching *her Beloved, Ver.* 9. *What is thy Beloved more than another Beloved?* She takes occasion (being full of love) which is glad of all occasions to speak of the Beloved,

Beloved, to burſt forth into his *Praiſes*, by many elegant Expreſſions, *Verſ.* 10, 11, 12, &c.

1. *In generall*; ſetting him at a large diſtance, beyond compariſon from all others, to be *The chiefeſt of ten thouſand*, *Verſ.* 10.
2. *In particulars*, Ver. 11, &c. *His head is as moſt fine gold*, &c.

The *Iſſue* whereof was; That, *The Daughters of Ieruſalem* become likewiſe inamoured with him, Chap. 6. 1. and thereupon enquire alſo after him: *Whether is thy Beloved gone, O thou faireſt among women*, &c. Unto which demand the *Church* makes Anſwer, *Chap.* 6. 2. and ſo *Ver.* 3 of that *Chapter*, makes a confident triumphant cloſe unto all theſe grand paſſages fore-named. *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine*, &c. all which will better appeare in the Particulars themſelves.

The firſt thing then which offereth it ſelfe to our conſideration, is, *Chriſts Anſwer to the Churches Invitation*, Chap. 4. 16.

I am come into my Garden, my Siſter, my Spouſe, I have gathered my myrrhe with my ſpice; I have eaten my honey-combe with my honey; I have drunke my wine with my milke; Eat O friends, drink, yea drink abundantly O beloved. In which *Verſe* we have,

1. *Chriſts* Anſwer to the *Churches* Petition; [*I am come into my Garden.*]
2. A Compellation, or Deſcription of the *Church*, [*My Siſter, my Spouſe.*]
3. *Chriſts* acceptation of what he had gotten there

there, [*I have gathered my myrrhe with my ſpice, I have eaten my honey-combe with my honey.*]

4. There is, An Invitation of all *Chriſts* friends to a magnifique abundant feaſt, [*Eat O friends, drinke, yea drink abundantly, O beloved.*]

For the firſt then, in that *Chriſt* makes ſuch a reall Anſwer unto the *Churchs* Invitation, *I am come into my Garden*, &c. We ſee, That *Chriſt* comes into his *Garden*: 'Tis much that he that hath heaven to delight in, will delight to dwell among the ſonsof ſinfull men: but this he doth for us, and ſo takes notice of the *Churches* Petition.

Let my Beloved come into his Garden, and eat his pleaſant fruit. The right ſpeech of the *Church* that gives all to *Chriſt*, who when ſhe hath made ſuch a petition, heares it. The Order is this.

The Order of Gods hearing his Church.

Firſt of all, God makes his *Church* lovely, planteth good things therein, and then ſtirs up in her good deſires: both fitneſſe to pray from an inward gracious diſpoſition: and holy deſires: after which, Chriſt hearing the voice of his own Spirit in her, and regarding his owne preparations, he anſwers them graciouſly. Whence, in the firſt place we may obſerve, That,

Obſerv.

God makes us good, ſtirres up holy deſires in us, and then anſwers the deſires of his holy Spirit in us.

How the heart is prepared to prayer.

A notable place for this we have *Pſal.* 10. 17. which ſhewes how God firſt prepares the heart to pray, and then heares theſe deſires of the ſoule ſtirred up by his owne Spirit, *Lord, thou haſt heard the*

the desires of the humble, none are fit to pray but the humble, such as discerne their owne wants: *Thou wilt prepare their hearts, thou wilt make thine eare to heare.* So *Rom.*8.26. It is said, *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for, we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit it selfe maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered.* Thus the Spirit not onely stirs up our heart to pray: but also prepares our hearts unto it Especially this is necessary for us, when our thoughts are confused with trouble, grief, and Passions, not knowing what to pray. In this case the Spirit dictates the words of praier, or els, in a confusion of thoughts summes up all in a volie of sighs and unexpressible groanes. Thus it is true, that our hearts can neither be lifted up to Prayer, nor rightly prepared for it, in any frame fitting, but by Gods owne Spirit. Nothing is accepted of God toward heaven and happines, but that which is spirituall: all saving and sanctifying good comes from above. Therefore God must prepare the heart, stirre up holy desires, dictate prayer: must do all in all, being our *Alpha* and *Omega*.

Rev.1.6.

Why God heares our Prayers.

Reason 1.

Now, *God heares our Prayers*, First, *Because the Materialls of these holy desires are good in themselves, and from the Person from whence they come, his beloved Spouse*, as it is *Cant.*2.14. where *Christ* desiring to heare the voice of his *Church*, saith, *Let me see thy Countenance, and let me heare thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.* Thus the voice of the *Spouse* is sweet, because it is stirred

ſtirred up by his owne Spirit, which burnes the *Incenſe*, and whence all comes which is ſavingly good. This offering up of our prayers in the name of *Chriſt*, is that which with his ſweet odors perfumes all our *Sacrifices* and *Prayers*; becauſe being in the Covenant of Grace, God reſpects whatſoever comes from us, as we do the deſires of our neare friends. Rev. 8. 3.

And then againe, God heares our Prayers, *Becauſe he lookes upon us as we are in election, and choice of God the Father, who hath given us to him.* Not onely as in the neare bond of marriage, husband and wife, but alſo as he hath given us to *Chriſt*: which is his plea unto the Father, *Ioh.* 17. 6. *Thine they were, thou gaveſt them me*, &c. The deſires of the Church pleaſe him, becauſe they are ſtirred up by his Spirit, and proceed from her that is his: whoſe voice he delights to heare, and the prayers of others for his Church are accepted, becauſe they are for her that is his Beloved.

To confirme this further, ſee *Iſa.* 58. 9. *Thou then ſhalt cry, and the Lord ſhall anſwer; thou ſhalt call, and preſently he ſhall ſay, Here I am*, &c. ſo as ſoone as *Daniel* had ended that excellent prayer, the Angell telleth him, *At the beginning of thy ſupplications the decree came forth*, &c. So becauſe he knowes what to put into our hearts, he knowes our deſires and thoughts. And therefore accepts of our prayers and heares us; becauſe he loves the voice of his owne Spirit in us. So it is ſaid, *He fulfils the deſires of them that feare him; and* Dan. 9. 23.

Cant.2.14. Psal.145.18. Mat.7.7. *he is neare to all that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.* And our Saviour he saith; *Ask and ye shall receive*,&c. So we have it, 1 *Ioh.*5.14. *And we know if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.*

Use 1. Let it therefore be a singular comfort to us, that in all wants, so in that of friends, when we have none to go to, yet we have God to whom we may freely powre out our hearts, there being no place in the world that can restraine us from his presence, or his Spirit from us, he can heare us and help us in all places. What a blessed estate is this? None can hinder us from driving this trade with Christ in heaven.

Use 2. And let us make another use of it likewise, to be a meanes to stirre up our hearts, *to make use of our priviledges.* What a prerogative is it for a favourite to have the Eare of his Prince, him we account happy: surely he is much more happy, that hath Gods eare, him to be his Father in the covenant of grace: Him reconciled, upon all occasions to powre out his heart before Him, who is *mercifull* and *faithfull*, *wise* and *most able* to helpe us. *Why are we discouraged therefore; and why are we cast downe*, when we have such a powerfull and such a gracious God to go to in all our extremities? He that can pray can never be much uncomfortable.

Psal.42.ult.

Use 3. So likewise, it should stirre us up to keep our peace with God, that so we may alwayes have accesse

acceſſe unto him, and communion with him. What a pitifull caſe is it to loſe other comforts, and therewith alſo to be in ſuch a ſtate, that we cannot go to God with any boldneſſe? It is the greateſt loſſe of all, when we have loſt the ſpirit of Prayer. For, if we loſe other things, we may recover them by Prayer. But when we have loſt this boldneſſe to go to God, and are afraid to look him in the face (as malefactors the Iudge) this is a wofull eſtate.

The greateſt loſſe of all.

Now there are *diverſe caſes wherein the ſoule is not in a ſtate fit for Prayer.* As that firſt, *Pſal. 66. 18. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not regard my Prayer.* If a man hath a naughty heart, that purpoſeth to live in any ſinne againſt God, he takes him for an enemy, and therefore will not regard his Prayer. Therefore we muſt come with a reſolute purpoſe, to break off all ſinfull courſes, and to give up our ſelves to the guidance of Gods Spirit. And this will be a forcible Reaſon to move us thereunto, becauſe ſo long as we live in any knowne ſinne unrepented of: God neither regards us nor our prayers. What a fearfull eſtate is this, that when we have ſuch need of Gods favour in all eſtates; in ſickneſſe, the houre of death, and in ſpirituall temptation, to be in ſuch a condition, as that we dare not go to God? Though our lives be civill, yet if we have falſe hearts that feed themſelves with evill imaginations, and with a purpoſe of ſinning (though we act it not) the Lord will not regard the prayers of ſuch a one, they are abominable (*The very*

Caſes wherein one is unfit to pray.

A ſtrong motive to ſanctification.

Pro. 13. *ſacrifice of the wicked is abominable*)

Another caſe is, *when we will not forgive others.* We know it is directly ſet downe in the Lords Prayer. *Forgive us our treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſſe againſt us*, and there is further added Verſ. 15. *If you forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you.* If our hearts tell us we have no diſpoſition to pardon, be at peace and agreement, then we do but take Gods Name in vaine, when we ask him to forgive our ſinnes, and we continue in envy and malice. In this caſe God will not regard our prayers, as it is ſaid; I care not for your Prayers, or for any ſervice you performe to me: why? *For your hands are full of blood:* you are unmercifull, of a cruell fierce diſpoſition, which cannot appeare before God rightly, nor humble it ſelfe in Prayer. If it doth; its owne bloudy and cruell diſpoſition wilbe objected againſt the Prayers, which are not mingled with *faith* and *love*, but with *wrath* and bitterneſſe. Shall I look for mercy that have no mercifull heart my ſelfe? Can I hope to find that of God, that others cannot find from me? An unbroken diſpoſition which counts *Pride* an ornament, that is cruell and fierce, it cannot go to God in Prayer. For, whoſoever would prevaile with God in prayer, muſt be humble: for *our ſupplications muſt come from a loving peaceable diſpoſition, where there is a reſolution againſt all ſinne.* Neither is it ſufficient to avoid *grudging* and *malice* againſt theſe, but we muſt looke that others have not cauſe to grudge againſt

2

Mat. 6. 12.

Iſa. 1. Iſa. 66.

Pſal. 73.

againſt us, as it is commanded. *Matth.5.23. If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remembreſt that thy Brother hath ought againſt thee: leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, firſt be reconciled to thy Brother: and then come and offer thy gift.* So that if wee doe not ſeeke reconciliation with men unto whom we have done wrong, God will not bee reconciled to us, nor accept any ſervice from us.

If then we would have our Prayers, and our Perſons accepted, or reſpected, let us make conſcience of that which hath beene ſaid, and not looſe ſuch a bleſſed priviledge as this is, that God may regard our prayers. But here may be asked.

How ſhall I know whether God regard my prayers or not? *Queſt.*

Firſt, *When he grants the thing prayed for, or inlargeth our hearts to pray ſtill.* It is a greater gift then the thing it ſelfe we beg, to have a ſpirit of prayer with a heart inlarged. For, as long as the heart is inlarged to prayer, it is a ſigne, that God hath a ſpeciall regard of us; and will grant our petition in the beſt and fitteſt time. *Anſw.* 1 2 *How to know when God heares our prayers.*

When *hee anſwers us in a better and higher kind*, as *Paul* when he prayed for the taking away of the Prick of the fleſh; had promiſes of ſufficient grace. 3

When againe, *He gives us inward peace, though he gives not the thing:* as *Phil.4.7. In nothing bee carefull, but in all things let your requeſts be made to God, with prayer and thankeſgiving.* 4

But ſometime he doth not anſwer our requeſts. *Object.* *Anſw.*

It is true he doth not, but *the peace of God which passeth al understanding guards our hearts & minds in the knowledge & love of God.* So though he answers not our prayers in particular; yet he vouchsafes inward peace unto us; assuring us that it shall goe well with us, though not in that particular wee beg. And thus in not hearing their prayers, yet they have their hearts desire, when Gods will is made known. Is not this sufficient for a Christian, either to have the thing, or to have inward peace, with assurance that it shall go better with them, then if they had it: with a spirit inlarged to pray, till they have the thing prayed for? If any of these be; God respects our prayers.

Againe, In that *Christ* is thus ready to come unto *his Garden* upon the *Churches Invitation*, we may further observe; That

Observ. *Christ vouchsafes his gracious Presence to his Children, upon their desire of it.*

The point is cleere, from the beginning of the world, the *Church* hath had the presence of *Christ* alway. For, either he hath beene present in *Sacrifices*, or in some other things, *signes of his presence*, as in the *Bush*, or some more glorious manifestation of his presence, the *Arke*, and in the *Cloude*, and Pillar of fire, and after that more gloriously in the *Temple*: he hath ever beene present with his *Church* in some signe or evidence of his presence, he delighted to be with the children of men. Sometimes before that, sometimes hee assumed a body and afterward laid it downe againe untill hee came indeed to take our nature upon

Exod. 3. 2.
Exod. 25. 22.
Exod. 13. 21.

upon him never to leave it againe. But, *heere is meant, a ſpirituall preſence moſt of all*; which the *Church* in ſome ſort ever had: now deſires, and he offers: as being *a God hearing prayer.* And to inſtance in one place for all to ſee how ready *Chriſt* hath alwaies beene to ſhew his preſence to the *Church* upon their deſire. What elſe is the *burden* of the 107. *Pſalme*; but a repetition of Gods readineſſe to ſhew his preſence in the *Church*, upon their ſeeking unto him, and unfained deſire of it: notwithſtanding all their manifold provocations of him to anger: which is well ſummed up, *Pſal.*106.43. *Many times did he deliver them, but they provoked him with their counſell, and were brought low for their iniquity. Neverthelesſe, heeregarded their affliction when he heard their crie.* Pſal.65.2.

It doth not content the *Church*, to have a kinde of ſpirituall preſence of *Chriſt*; but, *It is carried from deſire to deſire*, till the whole deſire be accompliſhed. For, *as their are graduall preſences of Chriſt, ſo their are ſutable deſires in the Church which riſe by degrees. Chriſt* was preſent 1 by his gracious Spirit. And then 2 more gratiouſly preſent in his *Incarnation*, the ſweeteſt time that ever the *Church* had from the beginning of the world untill then. It being *the deſire of nations*: for the diſcription of thoſe who lived before his comming, is from, *the waiting for the conſolation of Iſrael*, that is, for the firſt comming of *Chriſt*. And then there is a third and more glorious preſence of *Chriſt*, that all of us wait for, whereby we are deſcribed to be ſuch, as *waite for the comming of Chriſt*: for the

That the Church is carried from deſire to deſire.

ſoule of a Chriſtian is never ſatisfied untill it injoy the higheſt deſire of *Chriſts* preſence, which the *Church* knew well enough muſt follow in time. Therefore ſhee eſpecially deſires this ſpirituall preſence, in a larger and fuller meaſure, which ſhee in ſome meaſure already had. So then, *Chriſt* is graciouſly preſent in his *Church*, by his holy Spirit. *I will be with you* (ſaith he) *unto the end of the world.* It is his promiſe, when I am gone my ſelfe; *I will not leave you comfortleſſe*, but leave with you my *Vicar-Generall*; (the *Holy Spirit* the *Comforter*) who ſhall be alway with you. But

Matth. 28.

Iohn 16.

Queſt. *How ſhall we know that Chriſt is preſent in us?*

Anſw. To know this we ſhall not need to pull him from heaven, we may know it in the *Word* and *Sacraments* and in the *Communion of Saints*; for, theſe are the conveyances whereby he manifeſts himſelf, together with the work of his own gratious Spirit in us: for, as we need not take the *Sunne* from Heaven to know whether or not it be up, or be day: which may be knowne by the light, heate, & fruitfullnes of the creature, and as in the *Spring*, we need not looke to the Heaven to ſee whether the *Sunne* be come neere us or not; for looking on the *Earth* we may ſee all greene, freſh, lively ſtrong and vigorous. So it is with the preſence of *Chriſt*, we may know he is preſent, by that light which is in the ſoule, convincing us of better courſes to be taken, of a ſpirituall life, to know heavenly things, and the difference of them from earthly and to ſet a price upon them. When there is together with *light*, a heate above nature. The affections

How to know that Chriſt is preſent in us.

affections are kindled to love the beſt things, and to joy in them.

And when together with *heate, there is ſtrength and vigor, to carrie us to ſpirituall duties*, framing us to a holy communion with God, and one with another.

And likewiſe when *there is every way cheerefullnes and inlargement of ſpirit*; as it is with the creature when the *Sunne approacheth*. For theſe cauſes, the *Church* deſires *Chriſt*, that ſhe may have more light, life, heate, vigor, ſtrength, and that ſhe may be more cheerefull and fruitfull in duties. The ſoule when it is once made ſpirituall, doth ſtill deſire, a further and further preſence of *Chriſt*, to be made better and better.

What a comfort is this to Chriſtians, that they have the preſence of *Chriſt* ſo farre forth, as ſhall make them happie, and as the earth will afford. *Nothing but Heaven* (*or rather Chriſt in Heaven*) it ſelfe, *will content the child of God*. In the meane time his preſence in the Congregation, makes their ſoules (as it were) Heaven. If the Kings preſence, who carries the Court with him, makes all places where he is a Court. So *Chriſt he carries a kinde of Heaven with him, whereſoever he is, his preſence hath with it, life, light, comfort, ſtrength & all.* For one beame of his countenance, will ſcatter all the cloudes of griefe whatſoever. It is no matter where we be, ſo *Chriſt* be with us. If with the 3 Children in a fiery furnace; it is no matter, *if a fourth be there alſo*. So, if *Chriſt* be with us, the flames nor nothing ſhall hurt us. If in a dungeon as

That where Chriſt is preſent, there Heaven is in ſome degrees.

Dan. 3.

Act. 15. 52. as *Paul* and *Sylas* were, if *Christs* presence be there, by his spirit to inlarge our soules; all is comfortable whatsoever. It changeth the nature of all things, sweetneth every thing, besides that sweetnesse which it brings unto the soule, by the presence of the spirit, as we see in the *Acts*, when they had received *the Holy Ghost more abundantly*, they cared not what they suffered; regarded not whipping, *nay were glad that they were accounted worthy to suffer any thing for Christ.* Whence came this fortitude? from the presence of *Christ*, and the *Comforter* which he had formerly promised?

Act. 5. 41.

That having Christs presence we need feare nothing.

So, let us have the spirit of *Christ* that comes from him; then it is no matter what our condition be in the world: upon this ground let us feare nothing that shall befall us in Gods cause, whatsoever it is. We shall have a spirit of prayer at the worst. God never takes away the spirit of Supplication from his children, but leaves them that, untill at length he possesse them fully of their desires. In all *Christs delaies*, let us looke unto the *Cause*; and to our *Carriage* therein: Renew our *Repentance*, that we may be in a fit state to go to God, and God to come to us. Desire him to fit us for prayer and holy communion with him, that we may never doubt of his presence.

THE

THE SECOND SERMON.

CANT. V. I.

I am come into my Garden, my Sister, my Spouse: I have gathered my Myrre with my Spice, I have gathered my hony-combe with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milke: eate O friends, drinke, yea drinke abundantly, O Beloved!

THIS Song is a mirror of *Christs* love, A discovery of which wee have in part in this verse. Wherein *Christ* accepts of the invitation of the *Church*, and comes into his Garden: and he entertaines her with the termes of

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of *Sister* and *Spouse*. Herein observe the description of the *Church*, and the sweet Compellation, [*My Sister, my Spouse.*] Where there is both Affinity and Consanguinity, all the bonds that may tye us to *Christ* and *Christ* to us.

1. *His Sister, by Bloud.*
2. *His Spouse, by Mariage.*

Christ is our *Brother*, and the *Church* and every particular true member thereof is *his Sister*. I go
Iohn 20.17. saith *Christ*, *To my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God.* Go (saith he) *and tell my Brethren* this was after his resurrection, his advancement did not change his disposition. Go tell my brethren that left me so unkindly, goe tell *Peter* that was most unkinde of all, and most cast downe with the sence of it. Hee became our Brother by Incarnation: For, all our union is from the first union of two natures in one person *Christ* became *bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh*; to make us spiritually bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh.

Therefore *let us labour to be like to him*, who for
Isa 7.14. that purpose became like to us *Immanuell* God
2 Pet.1.4. with us, that we might be like him, and *and partake of the divine Nature*. Whom should we rather desire to be like then one so great so gracious so loving?

Againe, *Christ was not ashamed to call us Brethren*, nor abhorred the *Virgins* wombe, to be shut up in those dark cells and streites: but tooke our base nature, when it was at the worst, and not only our nature, but our miserable condition and curse

curie due unto us. Was not he ashamed of us, and shall we be ashamed to owne him and his cause? Against this Cowardize it is a thunderbolt, which our Saviour *Christ* pronounceth. *He that is ashamed of me before men, him will I be ashamed of before my Father, and all the holy Angels.* It argues a base disposition, either for frowne or favour to desert a good cause in evill times. Mark. 8. 38.

Againe, *It is a point of comfort to know that we have a Brother, who is a favourite in Heaven,* who though he abased himselfe for us, is yet Lord over all. Unlesse he had beene our Brother, he could not have beene our husband, for Husband and Wife should be of one nature. That he might marie us, therefore he came, and tooke our nature, so to be fitted to fulfill the worke of our Redemption. But now he is in Heaven, set downe at the right hand of God: the true *Ioseph*, the high Steward of Heaven, he hath all power committed unto him, hee rules all. What a comfort is this to a poore soule that hath no friends in the world, that yet he hath a friend in Heaven, that will owne him for his Brother, in, and through whom he may goe to the Throne of Grace boldly and powre out his soule. What a comfort was it to *Iosephs* brethren that their brother was the second person in the kingdome? Heb. 4. 15, 16.

Againe, *It should be a Motive to have good Christians in high estimation, and to take heed how we wrong them,* for their Brother will take their part. *Saul Saul why persecutest thou me?* saith the head in Heaven, when his members were troden on upon Acts 9. 4.

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upon earth. It is more to wrong a Christian, then the world takes it for; for *Christ* takes it as done to himselfe. *Absolom* was a man wicked, and unnaturall, yet hee could not endure the wrong that was done to his sister *Thamar*. *Iacobs* sonnes tooke it as a high indignity, that their sister should be so abused. Hath *Christ* no affections now he is in Heaven, to her that is so neere him as the *Church* is? howsoever he suffer men to tiranize over her for a while, yet it will appeare ere long, that he will take the *Churches* part, for, he is her Brother.

My Sister, my Spouse.

The Churches Royall discent.

The *Church* is *the Daughter of a King*, begotten of God, *the Sister, and Spouse of a King*, because she is the *Sister*, and *Spouse* of *Christ*, and the Mother of all that are spirituall Kings; the *Church* of *Christ* is every way Royall. Therefore, *we are Kings, because we are Christians*. Hence the Holy Ghost doth add heere to *Sister, Spouse*: indeed taking the advantage of such Relations as are most comfortable to set out the excellent, and transcendent Relation, that is betweene *Christ*, and his *Church*, all other are not what they are termed so much as glasses to see better things. *Riches, Beautie, Mariage, Nobility*, &c. are scarce worthy of their names; these are but Titles, and empty things, though our base nature make great matters of them, yet *the reality and substance of all these are in Heavenly things*. True *Riches*, are the heavenly *Graces*, true *Nobility* is

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to be *borne of God*, to be the *Sister* and *Spouse* of *Christ*, True *pleasures* are *those of the Spirit*, which endure for ever, and will stand by us, when all outward comforts will vanish. That mysticall union and sweet communion is set downe with such variety of expressions, *to shew, that whatsoever is scattered in the Creature severally, is in Him intirely.* He is both a *friend*, and a *Brother*, a *Head*, and a *Husband* to us, therefore hee takes the names of all, whence we may observe further,

Why the variety of Christs love to the Church, is so diversly expressed

That *The Church is the Spouse of Christ.* It springs out of him, even as *Eve* taken out of *Adams* Rib; (so the *Spouse* of *Christ*) was taken out of his side (when it was pierced) the *Church* rose out of his Bloud, and Death; for he Redeemed it, by satisfying divine justice: we being in such a Condition, that *Christ* must Redeeme us, before he could wed us. First, he must be incarnate in our Nature, before he could be a fit husband; and then, because we were in Bondage and Captivity, we must be Redeemed before hee could marrie us: *hee purchased his Church with his owne bloud. Christ* hath right to us, he bought us dearely.

Observ.

Act. 20. 28.

Againe, *another foundation of this Marriage* betweene *Christ* and us, is *Consent*; he workes us by his Spirit to yeeld to him, there must be consent on our part, which is not in us by nature, but wrought by his spirit, *&c.* We yeeld to take him *upon his owne tearmes*; that is, that we shall leave our fathers house, all our former carnall acquaintance, when he hath wrought our consent, then the

How Christ must be taken of us.

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the marriage betweene him and us is ſtrooke up.

Some few reſemblances will make the conſideration of this the more comfortable. 1. *The Husband takes his wife under his owne name*, ſhe looſing her owne name is called by his. So we are called Chriſtians of *Chriſt*. 2. *The Wife is taken with all her debt, and made partaker of the honours, and Riches of her Husband.* Whatſoever hee hath is hers, and he ſtands anſwerable for all her debts, ſo it is heere, we have not onely the name of *Chriſt* upon us, but we partake his honours, and are *Kings, Prieſts*, and *Heires* with him. Whatſoever he hath, he hath taken us into the fellowſhip of it; ſo that his Riches, are ours, and likewiſe, whatſoever is ours, that is ill, he hath taken it upon him, even the wrath due to us, for hee came betweene that and us, when he was made ſinne, and a curſe for us; ſo There is a bleſſed change betweene *Chriſt* and us; his honours and Riches are ours; We have nothing to beſtow on him, but our Beggery, ſinnes, and miſeries, which he tooke upon him.

1

2

Revel. 1. 5, 6.

2 Cor. 5, 21.

3

The duty of Miniſters.

Thoſe that bring together theſe two different parties, are the friends of the Bride; that is, the Miniſters, as it is *Iohn* 3. 23. They are the *paranymphi* the friends of the Bride, that learne of *Chriſt* what to report to his *Spouſe*, and ſo they wooe for *Chriſt*; and open the Riches, Beauty, honour, and all that is lovely in him, which is indeed the eſpeciall duty of Miniſters, to lay open his unſearchable Riches, that the *Church* may know what a Husband

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band she is like to have, if she cleave to him, and what an one she leaves, if she forsake him. It was well said in the *Counsell* of *Basil* out of *Bernard*, *Nemo committit sponsam suam Vicario; nemo enim Ecclesiæ sponsus est*; None commits his wife to a Vicar, for none is the husband of the *Church*. To be Husband of the *Church* is one of the incommunicable titles of *Christ*, yet usurped by the Pope. *Innocent* the third was the first that wronged *Christs* bed by challenging the title of *Sponsus*, Husband of the *Church*. *Bernard* forbids his scholler *Eugenius* this title, *Epist.* 237. *ad Eugenium*. It is enough for Ministers to be friends of the Bride. Let us yeeld him to be Husband of the *Church* that hath given himselfe to sanctifie it with washing of water and blood, *Ephes.* 5. 26. we are a wife of blood to him.

In this sweet Conjunction we must know, *that by nature, we are cleane otherwaies then Spouses*; for what was *Salomons* wife *Pharoahs* daughter? a Heathen, till shee came to be *Salomons* Spouse. And as we reade in *Moses* the strange woman must have *her haire cut off, and her nayles pared*, before she should be taken into the *Church*, there must bee an alteration; so before the *Church* (which is not *Heathenish*, but indeed *Hellish* by nature, and led by the spirit of the world) be fit to be the Spouse of *Christ*, there must be an alteration and a change of nature; *Christ* must alter, renew, Purge, and fit us for himselfe, the Apostle saith, *Ephes.* 5. 16, it was the end of his death, not onely to take us to Heaven, but to sanctifie

Isa. 11. 7, 8. Iohn 3. 3.

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Use. 1. *Consolation.*

Uxori ille non intenditur.

1 Pet. 3. 7.

Zach. 2. 8.

us on Earth, and prepare us that we might be fit *Spouses* for himselfe.

Let us oft thinke of this neareneſſe betweene Christ and us (if we have once given our names to him) and not be discouraged for any sinne, or unworthineſſe in us. *Who sues a wife for debt, when she is married?* Therefore answer all accusations Thus; Goe to *Christ*; if you have any thing to say to me, go to my husband; *God is just, but he will not have his Iustice twice satisfied, seeing whatsoever is due thereunto, is satisfied by Christ our Husband?* What a comfort is this to a distressed Conscience; if sinne cannot dismay us, which is the ill of ills and cause of all evill, what other ill can dismay us? He that exhorts us to beare with the infirmities one of another, and hath enjoyned the husband to beare with the wife (*as the weaker vessell*) will not he beare with his *Church* (as the weaker vessell) performing the duty of an husband in all our infirmities?

Againe, His desire is to make her better, and not to cast her away for that which is amisse. And for *Outward ills*, they are but to refine, and make us more conformable to *Christ* our Husband, to fit us for heaven, the same way that he went. *They have a blessing in them all*, for he takes away all that is hurtfull, he pitties, and keepes us *as the apple of his eye*. Therefore, let us often thinke of this, since he hath vouchsafed to take us so neere to himselfe. Let us not loose the comfort that this meditation will yeeld us. We love for goodnesse, beauty, riches, but *Christ* loves us to make

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us so, and then loves us because we are so in all estates whatsoever.

Use 3. And *if Christ be so neere us, Let us labour for chast judgements*, that we doe not defile them with errours, seeing the whole soule is espoused to *Christ*, Truth is the Spouse of our understandings it is not left to us to be wanton in opinions to take up what conceipt we will of things, so we ought to have chast affections not cleaving to base things, it hath beene oft times seene, that one husband hath had many wives, but never from the beginning of the world, that one wife hath had many husbands. God promiseth to betroth his *Church* to him in righteousnes & faithfullnes, that is, as he will be faithfull to her, so she shall by his grace be faithfull to him, faithfullnes shall be mutuall, the *Church* shall not be false to *Christ*; so there is no Christian soule must think to have many husbands; for *Christ* in this case is a jealous husband. Take heed therfore of spirituall harlotrie of heart, for our affections are for *Christ*, and cannot be better bestowed. In other things we loose our love, & the things loved; but heer we loose not our love, but this is a perfecting love, which drawes us to love that which is better, then our selves. We *are, as we affect, our affections are, as their Objects be*, if they be set upon better things, then our selves, they are bettered by it, they are never rightly bestowed, but when they are set upon *Christ*; and upon other things as they answer, and stand with the love of *Christ*. For, *the prime love, when it is rightly bestowed, it orders, and regu-*

Veritas est spōsa intellectus

That our affections are like their objects.

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lates all other loves whatsoever. No man knowes how to use earthly things, but a Christian, that hath first pitched his love on *Christ*, then seeing all things in him, and in all them a beame of that love of his, intending happinesse to him, so he knowes how to use every thing in order. Therefore let us keepe our Communion with *Christ*, and esteeme nothing more, then his love, because he esteemes nothing more then ours.

Quest. *But how shall we know, whether we be espoused to Christ, or not?*

Answ. 1 *How to know if we be espoused to Christ or not*

Our hearts can tell us, whether we yeeld consent to him, or not. In particular, whether wee have received him, as he will be received, as a right Husband, that is, *Whether we receive him to be ruled by him*, to make him our Head. For the wife, when shee yeelds to be married, therewith also surrenders up her owne will to be ruled by her husband; so farre she hath denied her owne will, she hath no will of her owne. *Christ* hath wisedome enough for us, and himselfe too, whose wisedome, and will must be ours; *To be led by divine Truths so farre, as they are discovered unto us, and to submit our selves thereunto, is a signe of a gratious heart, that is married to Christ.*

2 *The right disposition of the Spouse of Christ*

Againe, *a willingnesse to follow Christ in all conditions as he is discovered in the Word.* To suffer *Christ* to have the soveraignty in our affections, above all other things and persons in the world. This is the right disposition of a true Spouse. For as it was at the first institution, *there must be a leaving of Father, and Mother, and all, to cleave to*

your

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the husband: so heere, when any thing and *Christ* cannot stand together, or else we shall never have the comfort of this sweete Name. Many men will be glad to owne *Christ* to be great by him, (but as S *Austin* complaines in his his time) *Christ Iesus* is not loved for Iesus his owne sake, but for other things, that he brings with him, *peace, plenty*, &c. as farre as it stands with these contentments; if *Christ* and the world part once, it will be knowne which we followed. In times of peace this is hardly discerned. If he will pay mens debts, so as they may have the credit and glory of the name to be called Christians, if hee will redeeme them from the danger of sinne, all is well; but *onely such have the comfort of this Communion, as love him for himselfe.* Let us not so much trouble our selves about signes as be carefull to doe our duty to *Christ*, and then will *Christ* discover his love cleerely unto us.

Vix diligitur Iesus propter Iesum.

Now, they that are not brought so neere to this happy condition by *Christ*, may yet have this incouragement, there is yet place of grace for them, let them therefore consider but these three things.

Use 4. Incouragement and direction for such as are not yet in Christ

1. *The excellency of Christ, and of the state of the Church, when it is so neare him.*
2. *The necessity of this to be so neare him.*
3. *That there is hope of it.*

There is in *Christ* whatsoever may commend a Husband, birth, comelinesse, riches, friends, wisdome, authority, *&c.*

The Excellencie of this condition to be one with 1

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Christ, is that all things are ours. For he is the *King*, and the *Church* the *Queene* of all; all things are serviceable to us, it is a wonderous neareneſſe, to be nearer to *Christ*, then the *Angels*, who are not his body, but ſervants that attend upon the *Church*: the Bride is nearer to him, then the Angels, for, *he is the Head, and Husband thereof, and not of the Angels.* What an excellent condition is this for poore fleſh and bloud, (that creeps up and downe the earth here deſpiſed.)

Heb. 2. 16.

2 But eſpecially, *If we conſider the Neceſſity of it*, we are all indebted for more then we are worth; to divine juſtice we owe a debt of obedience, and in want of that we owe a debt of puniſhment and we cannot anſwer one for a thouſand. What will become of us if we have not a husband to diſcharge all our debts but to bee impriſoned for ever?

A perſon that is a ſtranger to *Christ* though he were an *Achitophel* for his braine, a *Iudas* for his Profeſſion, a *Saul* for his place. Yet if his ſinnes be ſet before him he will be ſwallowed up of deſpaire, fearing to be ſhut up eternally under Gods wrath; therefore if nothing elſe move, yet let neceſſity compell us to take *Christ*.

3 Conſider not onely how ſutable and how neceſſary he is unto us, but what hope there is to have him, when as he ſueth to us by his meſſengers, and woeth us when as we ſhould rather ſeeke to him, and with other meſſengers ſendeth a privy meſſenger, his Holy Spirit to incline our hearts; let us therefore as we love our ſoules, ſuffer

ſuffer our ſelves to be won. But more of this in another place. The next Branch is

Chriſts acceptation.

3. *Chriſts Acceptation, I have gathered my Myrrh with my Spice, &c.* So that together with *Chriſts* preſence, here is *a Gratious acceptation of the proviſion of the Church, with a delight in it; and withall, a bringing of more with Him.* The *Church* had a double deſire, 1 That *Chriſt* would come to accept of what ſhee had for him of his owne Grace, which he had wrought in her ſoule. And 2 ſhee was alſo verily perſwaded, that he would not come empty handed, only to accept of what was there, but alſo would bring abundance of Grace and comfort with him. Therefore, *ſhee deſires, Acceptation and Increaſe:* both which deſires He anſwers. He comes to his *Garden*, ſhewes his acceptation, and withall he brings more. *I have gathered my Myrrh with my Spice, I have eaten my honey-combe with my honey: I have drunke my wine with my milke*, &c. Whence we obſerve,

Obſerv.

That God accepts of the Graces of his Children, and delights in them.

1

Firſt, Becauſe *they are the fruits that come from his Children, his Spouſe, his friend*, love of the perſon wins acceptance of that which is preſented from the perſon. What comes from love is lovingly taken.

2

They are the Graces of his Spirit. If we have any thing, that is good all comes from the ſpirit, which is firſt in *Chriſt* our Husband, and then in us. As the Oyntment was firſt powred on *Aarons* head, and then ran downe upon his rich

Pſal. 133.

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Garments: so all comes from *Christ* to us. Saint *Paul* calls the wife *the Glory of her Husband*, because (as in a glasse) she resembleth the Graces of her husband, who may see his owne Graces in her, so it is with *Christ* and the *Church*; face answereth to face (as *Salomon* saith in another case) *Christ* sees his owne face, beauty, glory in his *Church*, she reflects his Beames, he lookes in love upon her, and alwaies with his lookes conveyes Grace, and comfort; and the *Church* doth reflect backe againe his Grace; Therefore *Christ* loves but the reflection of his owne Graces in his Children, and therefore accepts them.

3. His kindnesse is such as he takes all in good part, *Christ* is love and kindnesse it selfe. Why doth he give unto her the name of *Spouse*, and *Sister* but that he would be kinde, and loving, and that we should conceave so of him? We see then the Graces of *Christ* accepting of us and what we do in his strength. Both we our selves are sacrifices, and what we offer is a sacrifice acceptable to God thorough him that offered himself as a sacrifice of sweet smelling savour, from which God smells a savour of rest. God accepts of *Christ* first & then of us, and what comes from us in him. We may bouldly pray as *Psal.* 20 3. *Lord remember all our offerings and accept all our sacrifices.* The blessed Apostle Saint *Paul* doth will us, *to offer up our selves* a holy and acceptable Sacrifice to God, when we are once in *Christ*. In the Old Testament we have divers manifestations of this acceptation. He accepted the Sacrifice of *Abel* (as it

Rom. 12. 1.

is

Serm. II.

is thought) by fire from Heaven; and so *Eliahs* sacrifice, and *Salomons* by fire. So in the New Testament, he shewed his acceptation of the *Disciples* meeting together, by a mighty wind and then filling them with the Holy Ghost. But now the declaration of the acceptation of our *Persons*, *Graces*, and *Sacrifice*, that we offer to him, *is most in peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost*, and from a holy fire of love kindled by the spirit whereby our sacrifices are burned. In the incense of prayer how many sweet spices are burned together by this fire of faith working by love, as humility, and patience in submitting to Gods will, hope of a gratious answer, holinesse, love to others, *&c.*

1 King. 18. 18. 1 Chron. 21. 2. Acts 2. 1.

If so be, that God accepts the performances and Graces (especially the Prayers of his Children) *Let it be an Argument to incourage us, to bee much in all holy duties.* It would dead the heart of any man, to performe service, where it should not be accepted, and the eye turned aside, not vouchsafing a gratious looke upon it; this would be a killing of all comfortable endeavours. But when all that is good is accepted, and what is amisse is pardoned, when a broken desire, a cup of cold water shall not goe unrespected nay unrewarded, what can we desire more? It is infidelity which is dishonorable to God and uncomfortable to our selves that makes us so barren and cold in duties.

Use 1.

Onely let our care be to approve our hearts unto *Christ*. When our hearts are right, wee can-

Use 2.

SERM. II.

cannot, but thinke comfortably of *Christ*. Thoſe that have offended ſome great Perſons, are afraid, when they heare from them, becauſe they thinke, they are in a ſtate diſpleaſing to them; So a ſoule, that is under the guilt of any ſinne, is ſo farre from thinking that God accepts of it, that it lookes to heare nothing from him, but ſome meſſage of anger, and diſpleaſure. But one that preſerves acquaintance, due diſtance, and reſpect to a great perſon, heares from him with comfort before he breakes open a letter, or ſees any thing, he ſuppoſes it comes from a friend, one that loves him. So as we would deſire to heare nothing but good newes from Heaven, and acceptation of all that we doe, let us be carefull to preſerve our ſelves in a good eſtate, or elſe our ſoules will tremble upon any diſcovery of Gods wrath. The guilty conſcience argues, what can God ſhew to me, being ſuch a wretch. The heart of ſuch an one cannot but miſgive, as where peace is made it will ſpeake comfort. It is ſaid of *Daniel*, that he was a man of Gods deſires; and of Saint *Iohn*, that *Chriſt* ſo loved him, that he leaned on his breaſt. Every one cannot bee a *Daniel*, nor one that leanes on *Chriſts* boſome, there are degrees of favour, and love: but there is no child of God, but he is beloved and accepted of him in ſome degree, but ſomething of this before in the former Chapter.

The diſcourſe of a guilty conſcience.

I have gathered my Myrrh with my Spice; I have eaten my honey-combe with my honey, &c.

That

That is, I have taken Contentment in thy Graces together with acceptation, there is a delight, and *God not onely accepts, but he delights in the Graces of his Children.* All my delight (saith *David*) is in those that are excellent, but this is not all, *Christ* comes with an inlargement of what hee findes.

Christ comes, and comes not empty; whensoever he comes, but with abundance of Grace. If Saint *Paul* (who was but *Christs* instrument) could tell the *Romanes*, *I hope to come to you in abundance of Grace and comfort*, because he was a blessed instrument to convey good from *Christ* to the people of God, as a Conduit-pipe: How much more shall *Christ* himselfe, where he is present, come with Graces and comfort? Those that have communion with *Christ* therefore, have a comfortable communion, being sure to have it inlarged, for *To him that hath shall be given.* It is not onely true of his last comming (when hee shall come to judge the quicke and the dead) *I come, and my reward is with me*; but also of all his intermediate commings, that are betweene, when he comes to the soule, he comes not onely to accept what is there, but still with his reward with him, the increase of Grace, to recompence all that is good with the increase thereof. This made his presence so desired in the *Gospell* with those that had gracious hearts; They knew all was the better for *Christ*, the company the better, for he never left any house, or table where he was, but there was an increase of comfort, and of

Rom. 15. 29.

Mat. 25. 29.

Revel. 22. 12.

SERM. II.

of Grace. And as it was in his *Personall*, so it is in his *Spirituall presence*, he never comes, but he increases *Grace* and *Comfort*.

Exhortation to have Communion with Christ.

Therefore, let us be stirred up to have communion with *Christ* (by this motive) that thus we shal have an increase of a further measure of grace. Let us labour to be such, as *Christ* may delight in, for our Graces are *Honey* and *Spices* to him, and where he tasts sweetnesse, he will bring more with him. To him that overcommeth, he promiseth *the hidden Mannah*; they had *Mannah* before, but he meanes they shall have more abundant communion with me, who am *the hidden Mannah*. There is abundance in him to be had, as the soule is capable of abundance. Therefore we may most fruitfully and comfortably be conversant in holy exercises, and communion with *Christ*, because our soules are fit to be inlarged more and more, till they have their fullnesse in heaven, and still there is more Grace and Comfort to be had in *Christ*, the more we have to deale with him.

Revel. 2. 17.

Why Grace is set forth by Honey and Wine.

But to come to shew what is meant by *Honey* and *Wine*, &c. not to take uncertaine grounds from these words, but that which may be a foundation for us to build comfort and instruction on; we will not shew in particular what is meant by *Wine* and *Honey*, for that is not intended by the Holy Ghost; but shew in generall how acceptable the Graces of the Spirit of *Christ* are to him, that they feed him, and delight him, as *hony* and *hony* doe us, because in the covenant of grace, he filleth

filleth us by his Spirit of grace, to have comfort in us as we have in him. *For, except there be a mutuall joy in one another, there is not communion.* Therefore *Christ* furnisheth his *Church* with so much Grace, as is necessary for a state of absence heere, that may fit her for communion with him for ever in heaven. As *Isaack* sent *Rebeccah* before the marriage Iewells, and ornaments to weare, that she might be more lovely when they met. So our blessed *Saviour* he sends to his *Spouse* from heaven, Iewells, and ornaments (that is) *Graces* wherewith adorned, he may delight in her more and more till the mariage be fulfilled. Therefore in this Booke, the *Church* is brought in delighting in *Christ*, and he in the *Church*. *Thy love* (saith the *Church* to him) *is sweeter then wine.* *Christ* saith to the *Church* againe, *Thy love is sweeter then wine.* Whatsoever *Christ* saith to the *Church*, the *Church* saith backe againe to *Christ*, and he backe againe to the *Church*; so there is a mutuall contentment, and joy one in another.

Gen. 24. 22.

Cant. 1. 2.

Eate O friends, Drinke, &c.

Heere is an *Invitation*; when he comes stored with more Grace, and comfort, he stirs them up; both the *Church*, others, and all that beare good will to his People that they would delight in the Graces, and comforts of his *Church*. Whence observe, That

That all are stirred up to rejoyce in the Graces of the Church.

Observ.

we ought to rejoyce in the Comforts and Graces of others, and of our selves.

He stirreth up the *Church* heere as well as others,

SERM. II.

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He stirreth up the *Church* heere as well as others,

SERM. II.

others, for he ſpeakes to all, both to the *Church*, and the friends of it, he had need to ſtirre her up to injoy the comfort of her owne Grace; for *They are two diſtinct benefits, to have Grace; and to know that wee have it, though one ſpirit worke both.* The ſpirit workes Grace, and ſhewes us the things that God hath given us, yet ſometimes it doth the one, and not the other. *In the time of deſertion, and of Temptation we have Grace, but we know it not; right to comfort, but we feele it not.* There is no comfort of a ſecret unknowne treaſure: but ſo it is with the *Church*, ſhe doth not alwaies take notice of her owne Graces, and the right ſhe hath to Comfort.

1 Cor. 2. 12.

We have need to have Chriſts ſpirit to helpe us to know what good is in us. And indeed a Chriſtian ſhould not onely examine his heart for the evill that is in him, to be humbled, but what good there is, that he may joy and be thankfull. And ſince *Chriſt* accepts the very firſt fruits, the earneſt, and delights in them, we ſhould know what hee delights in, that we may go boldly to him, conſidering, that it is not of our ſelves, but of *Chriſt*, whatſoever is gratiouſly good. Therefore wee ought to know our owne Graces, for *Chriſt*, when he will have us comfortable indeed, will diſcover to us what Cauſe we have to rejoyce, and ſhew us, what is the worke of his owne Spirit, and our right to all comfort.

That we ought to rejoyce in the graces of others.

And ſo, *for others*, we ſhould not onely joy in our ſelves, and in our owne Condition, and Lot, but alſo in the happy condition of every good Chri-

Sermon. II.

Luke 15.10.

Christian. There is joy in heaven at the conversion of one sinner. *God the Father* joyes to have a new Sonne. *God the Sonne* to see the fruit of his owne Redemption, that one is pulled out of the state of damnation. And *God the Holy Ghost*, that he hath a new *Temple* to dwell in. *The Angels*, that they have a new charge to looke to, that they had not before, to joyne with them to praise God, so there is joy in heaven, the *Father*, *Sonne*, *and Holy Ghost with the Angels* joy at it: And all *True hearted Christians* joy in the graces one of another.

Reason 1.
2.
3.

For *God*, *Christ*, *and the Holy Ghost have glory by it*, *and the Church hath* 2 *comfort by the increase of a Saint*. 3 The prayer of a Christian adds new strength to the *Church*: what a happy condition is it when Gods glory, the *Churches* comfort and strength, and our owne joy meet together? So that we should all take notice of the Grace of God in others.

We ought to take notice of the workes of God in creation and providence; when we see plants, starres, and such like, or else we dishonour God. What then should we doe for his gifts and Graces in his children, that are above these in dignity, should we not take notice of what is gratiously good, and praise God for it? Thus they did for *Pauls* conversion, They glorified God; for when they saw, that *Paul* of a Woolfe, was become not only a sheep, but a Shepheard and leader of Gods flocke, they glorified God.

Gal. 1.24.

So the beleeving *Iewes*, when the *Gentiles* were con-

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Acts 11.18.

converted they *glorified God, that he had taken the Gentiles to be his Garden, and People.* When *Paul* and others had planted the Gospell, and God gave the increase, the godly Iewes rejoyced at that good. So we that are *Gentiles* should rejoyce, to heare of the conversion of the Iewes, and pray for it, for, then there will be a generall joy when that is. Want of joy shewes want of grace. There is not a surer Character of a Satanicall, and Cainish disposition, then to looke on the Graces of Gods children with a malignant eye: as *Caine*, who hated his Brother, because his workes were better then his. Those that deprave the Graces of God in others, and cloud them with disgraces, that they may not shine, and will not have the sweet ointment of their good names to spread, but cast dead flies into it, shew that they are of his disposition that is the accuser of the Brethren, it is a signe of the child of the divel, all that have Grace in them, are of *Christs* and of the Angels disposition, They joy at the Conversion, and growth of any Christians: Here such as they are stiled friends and Beloved, and indeed none but friends and beloved can love as *Christ* loves, and delight as *Christ* delights.

THE

THE THIRD SERMON.

CANT. V. 1,2.

I am come into my Garden, my Sister, my Spouse: I have gathered my Myrre with my Spice, I have eaten my hony-combe with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milke: eate O friends, drinke, yea, drinke abundantly, O Beloved!
I sleepe, but my heart waketh, &c.

IT hath beene shewed how *Christ* and the *Church* were feasting together. Shee entreated his company *to come into his Garden and eat his pleasant fruits:* He according to her desire, was come, and

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not onely feasted on the *Churches* provision, but also brought more with him. *Christ* taking walks in his *Garden* (that is, his *Church*, and every particular soule, which is as a sweet Paradise for him to delight in) is much refreshed: and in witnesse of acceptance brings increase. What greater incouragement can we wish, then that we being by nature as the *earth*, since the fall *accursed*; should be the soile of *Christs* delight, planted and watered by him, and that what we yeeld, should be so well taken of him. We are under so gracious a covenant, that all our services are accepted: not onely our *hony*, but *hony-combe*, not onely our *wine*, but our *milke*, our weake services as well as our strong: because the spirit which we have from him sweetneth all. As in Nature there is one common influence from heaven, but yet variety of flowers, Violets, Roses, Gilliflowers, Spices, all sweet in their severall kind with a different kind of sweetnesse: so all graces have their beginning from the common influence of *Christs* spirit, though they differ one from another, and are all accepted of the *Father of lights* from whence they come. *Christ* wonders at his owne grace, *O woman great is thy faith*, and *Cant. 3.6. Who is this that commeth out of the wildernesse like pillars of smoake, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the Merchant?*

Iames 1.17.

Luk. 15.28.

Let not the weakest of all others be discouraged; *Christ* lookes not to what he brings so much as out of what store; that which is least in quantity, may be most in proportion, as the *Widowes*

Luk. 21.3.

mite

mite was more in acceptance then richer offerings. *A paire of turtle doves* was accepted in the Law, and those that brought but *goats haire* to the building of the Tabernacle. Levit. 5.7. Exod. 35.6.

The particulars here specified that *Christ* took delight in, and inviteth others to a further degree of delight in, are

Myrrhe and Spice, hony and hony-combe, milke

Which shew, 1. The sweetnesse 2. The variety 3. The use } of grace and spirituall cõfort.

Myrrhe and *Spices*, 1 refresh the spirits, and 2 preserve from putrefaction: which are therefore used in embalming. If the soule be not embalmed with grace, it is a noisome carrion soule, and as it is in it selfe, so whatsoever commeth from it is abominable.

Milke and *hony* nourish and strengthen, and *Wine* increaseth spirits; and thereupon incourageth, and allayeth sorrow and cares. *Give wine to him that is ready to die.* The sence of the love of *Christ* is sweeter then wine, it banisheth feares and sorrow and care. Pro. 31.6.

From this mutuall delight betweene *Christ* and his *Spouse* we observe next that,

There is a mutuall feasting betwixt Christ and his Church, The *Church* bringeth what she hath of his Spirit, and *Christ* comes with more plenty.

For there being so neere a covenant betweene him and us, we are by his grace to performe all offices on our part, we invite him, and he inviteth

SERM. III.

us. There is not the meaneſt Chriſtian in whom there is not ſomewhat to welcome *Chriſt* withall, but *Chriſts* ſends his proviſion before, and comes (as we ſay) to his owne coſt; he ſends a ſpirit of faith, a ſpirit of love, a ſpirit of obedience. Some are content to invite others but are loth to goe to others, as if it were againſt ſtate: they would have wherewith to entertaine *Chriſt*, but are unwilling to be beholding to *Chriſt*. 2. Some are content to have benefit by *Chriſt*, as his righteouſneſſe to cover them, &c. but they deſire not grace to entertaine *Chriſt*: but a heart truly gracious deſireth both to delight in *Chriſt*, and that *Chriſt* may delight in it; it deſireth grace together with mercy, holineſſe with happineſſe. *Chriſt* could not delight in his love to us, if we by his grace had not a love planted in our hearts to him. But to come to ſpeake of this Feaſt.

We ſee it pleaſeth *Chriſt* to vaile heavenly matters with compariſons fetcht from earthly things that ſo he may enter into our ſoules the better by our ſences.

1

Chriſt maketh us a *feaſt, a marriage feaſt, a marriage feaſt with the Kings ſonne*, of all feaſts the moſt magnificent. A feaſt firſt in regard of the choiſe rarities we have in *Chriſt*. We have the beſt and the beſt of the beſt. *Fat things and the marrow of fatneſſe, wine, and wine on the lees*, refined that preſerveth the ſtrength. The comforts wee have from *Chriſt*, are the beſt comforts, the peace, the beſt peace, the priviledges the higheſt priviledges. *His fleſh* crucified for us, to ſatisfie

Iſa. 25. 6.

divine

divine justice, *is meate indeed*, *his blood* shed for us, *is drinke indeed*, that is the best, the only meate and drinke to refresh our soules: because these feed our soules, and that to eternall life. The love of God the Father in giving *Christ* to death, and *Christs* love in giving himselfe together with full contentment to divine justice: this gift it is that the soule especially feeds on, what could *Christ* give better then himselfe to feed on, he thought nothing els worthy for the soule to feed on, and this it daily feeds on, as daily guilt riseth from the breakings out of the remainder of corruption. Other dainties are from this, from hence we have the Spirit, and graces of the Spirit. If he giveth himselfe will he not give all things with himselfe?

Ioh. 6. 55.

As *Christ* maketh a feast of choise things for his elect and choise Spouse, so there is variety as in a feast. *Christ is made to us of God, Wisedome, Righteousnesse, Sanctification, and Redemption*, that we should not be too much cast downe with thought of our owne folly, guilt, unholinesse and misery. There is that in *Christ* which answereth to all our wants, and an all-sufficiency for all degrees of happinesse. Therefore he hath termes from whatsoever is glorious, and comfortable in heaven and earth. *Christ* is *all marrow all sweetnes*, all the severall graces, and comforts we have, and the severall promises whereby they are made over and conveyed unto us, are but *Christ* dished out in severall manner, as the need of every Christian shall require. *Christ* himselfe is the Ocean,

1 Cor. 1. 30.

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issuing into severall streames, to refresh the city of God. We can be in no condition, but we have a promise to feed on, and *all promises are yea and Amen* made to us *in Christ*, and performed to us for *Christ*.

2 Cor. 1. 20.

3 Therefore as we have in *Christ* a feast for variety, so for sufficiency of all good. No man goeth hungry from a feast. It was never heard for any to famish at a feast. In *Christ* there is not onely abundance, but redundance, a diffusive and a spreading goodnesse. As in breasts to give milke, in clouds to drop downe showers, in the sun to send forth beames: as *Christ* is full of grace and truth, so he fully discharges all his offices. There is an overflowing of all that is good for our good. He that could multiply bread for the body, he can multiply grace for our soule. If *he giveth life*, he giveth it *in abundance*. If *he giveth water of life*, he giveth *rivers*, not small streames. If *he giveth peace and joy*, he giveth it *in abundance*, his scope is to fill up our joy to the full. As he is able, so *is he willing to doe for us farre more abundantly then we are able to thinke or speake*. Where *Christ* is present he bringeth plenty with him. If wine be wanting at the first, he will rather turne water into wine, then there should be a faile.

Joh. 10. 10.

Joh. 7. 38.

Ephes. 3. 20.

4 In a feast there is variety of friendly company: so heere friends are stirred up to refresh themselves with us. We have the blessed Trinity, the Angells and all our fellow members in *Christ* to come with us.

There

There is no envie in ſpirituall things, wherein whatſoever the one hath the other hath not the leſſe.

In a feaſt becauſe it is intended for rejoycing there is muſicke, and what muſicke like to the ſweete harmony betweene God reconciled in *Chriſt* and the ſoule, and betweene the ſoule and it ſelfe in inward peace and joy of the Holy Ghoſt, ſhedding the love of *Chriſt* in the ſoule. We doe not onely joy but glory under hope of glory, and in *afflictions*, and in *God now* as ours, in whom now by *Chriſt* we have an intereſt. When we come ſorrowfull to this feaſt, we depart chearfull. This as *Davids* harpe ſtills all paſſions and diſtempers of ſpirit. 5 Rom. 6. 5. 2. 3. 10.

The founder and maſter of the feaſt is *Chriſt* himſelfe, and withall is both gueſt and and banquet and all. All graces and comforts are the fruits of his Spirit, and he alone that infuſed the ſoule, can ſatisfie the ſoule, he that is above the conſcience can onely quiet the conſcience, he is that *wiſdome* that *ſends forth maides*, his Miniſters to invite to his feaſt. Pro. 9. 3. It is he that cheereth up his gueſts as here. Thoſe that invited others brought ointment and powred it out upon them, to ſhew their welcome, and to cheere them up: as may appeare by our Saviours ſpeech to the Phariſee that invited him. Luk. 7. 44. So we have from *Chriſt* both the oyle of grace and oyle of gladneſſe, *he creates the fruits of the lips* to be *peace*, Iſa. 57. 19. ſpeaking that peace and joy to the heart that others do to the eare. Ier. 3. 15. *He raiſeth Paſtors according*

ding to his owne heart, to feed his sheepe.

The vessels wherein *Christ* conveyeth his dainties are, the ministery of the *Word* and *Sacraments*, by the *Word* and *Sacraments* we come to enjoy *Christ*, and his comforts and graces, and by this feast of grace we come at length to the feast of feasts, that feast of glory, when we shall be satisfied with the image of God, and enjoy fullnesse of pleasures for evermore, and which adds to the fullnesse we shall fully know that it shall be a never interrupted joy.

We see then that we cannot please *Christ* better then in shewing our selves welcome by cheerefull taking part of his rich provision It is an honour to his bounty to fall too, and it is the temper of spirit that a Christian aimes at, to *rejoyce alwaies in the Lord*, and that from injoying our priviledges in him. We are not bidden to mourne alwaies, but to *rejoyce alwaies*, and that upon good advisement, *rejoyce* and *I say againe* (saith Saint *Paul*) *rejoyce*. Indeed we have causes of mourning, but it is that the seed of joy should be sowne in mourning, and we can never be in so forlorne a condition, wherein if we understand *Christ* and our selves we have not cause of joy. *In me* (saith *Christ*) *yee shall have peace*. The world will feed us with *bread of affliction*. If the world can helpe it we shall have sorrow enough, and *Christ* knowes that well enough, and stirres us up to a cheerefull feeding on that he hath procured for us. He hath both will and skill and power and authority to feed us to everlasting life;

Phil. 4 4.

Phil. 4. 4.

Ioh. 16. 33.

life; for the *Father* ſent him forth and *ſealed* him to that purpoſe. All the ſprings of our joy are from him.

Our duty is to accept of *Chriſts* inviting of us, what will we doe for him if we will not feaſt with him, we will not ſuffer with him, if we will not feaſt with him, we will not ſuffer with him, if we will not joy with him and in him. Happy are they that come, though compelled by croſſes and other ſharp waies. If we rudely and churliſhly refuſe his feaſt heere, we are like never to taſte of his feaſt hereafter. Nothing provokes ſo deepely as kindneſſe deſpiſed. It was the cauſe of the Iewes rejection. *How ſhall we eſcape*, not if we perſecute, but *if we* doe but *neglect ſo great ſalvation.* Heb. 2. 3.

That which we ſhould labour to bring with us, is a taſte of theſe dainties, & an appetite to them. The ſoule hath a taſte of its owne, and as all creatures that have life, have a taſt to reliſh and diſtinguiſh of that which is good for them, from that which is offenſive: ſo whereſoever ſpirituall life is, there is likewiſe a taſte ſutable to the ſweet reliſh that is in ſpirituall things. God ſhould looſe the glory of many excellent creatures, if there were not ſeverall ſences to diſcerne of ſeverall goodneſſe in them: ſo if there were not a taſte in the ſoule we could never delight in God, and his rich goodneſſe in *Chriſt.*

Taſt is the moſt neceſſary ſence for the preſervation of the creature, becauſe there is neareſt application in taſte, and that we ſhould not be decei-

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Omnis vitæ gustu ducitur.

deceived in taste, we heare, see and smell before, and if these sences give a good report of the object, then we taste of it and digest it and turne it into fit nourishment: so the spirit of man after judgement of the fitnesse of what is presented, tasts of it, delights in it, and is nourished by it. There is an attractive drawing power in the soule whereby every member sucks that out of the food that is convenient for it: so the soule drawes out what is well digested by judgement, and makes it its owne for severall uses.

The chiefe thing that *Christ* requireth is a good stomacke to these dainties.

1 The meanes to procure an appetite. We are first to be sensible of spirituall wants and misery. The Passeover Lamb was eaten with sower herbes: so *Christ* crucified relisheth best to a soule affected with bitternesse of sin: whilst men are rich in their owne conceipt, they goe empty away; the duties and performances they trust too, are but husks, windy empty chaffe; swelling is not kinde nourishment.

2 That which hinders the sharpnesse of the stomacke are, could defluxions, that dull and flat the edge of it. So upon plodding upon the world, cold distillations drop upon the soule, and take away the savour and desire of heavenly things. These things fill not. There is both a vanity of emptinesse, and a vanity of short continuance in them. *Why should we lay out our money*, spend our time, our wits, our endeavour so much about them;

Isa. 55.

them; this makes so many starvelings in Religion.

Besides there be other noysome affections to be purged, as 1 *Pet.*2.1. which breed a distaste and disaffection to spirituall things; as *malice* and *guile*, *&c.* How can *Christ* be sweete to that soule unto which revenge is sweete.

Exercise quickens appetite. Those that exercise themselves unto godlinesse, see a need of spirituall strength to maintaine dutie. A dull formalist keepes his round, and is many yeares after where he was before; sees no need of further growth or strength. A Christian life managed as it should be indeed, as it hath much going out, so it must have much comming in, it will not els be kept up. Those that have a journey to goe will refresh themselves for afterward, least they faint by the way. 3

Company likewise of such as *labour for that blessed food that endureth to life eternall* provoketh to fall too as the rest doe, especially if they be equall or goe beyond us in parts: for we will reason with our selves, have not I as much need as they, if these things be good for them then they are good for me? 4 Ioh 6.27.

Thus Saint *Paul* foretelleth that the example of the Gentiles should provoke the Iewes to come in, and taste of the Banquet *Christ* hath provided for both. Especially this should stirre us up earnestly to take our part in that *Christ* hath provided; because we know not how soone the table may be taken away: when men see the Rom.11.1.

dishes

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dishes in removing, though before they have discoursed away much time of their supper, yet then they will fall fresh to it. We know not how long wisdome will be inviting of us, it will be our wisdome to take our time, least we put off so long, as wisedome her selfe laughs at our destruction, and a famine be sent, of all famines the most miserable; a famine of the Word, and then we may pine away eternally without comfort. *Christ* will not alwaies stand inviting of us, if we will none of his cheere, others will, and shall, when we shall starve.

Let this draw us on that we see heere *Christs* hearty and free wellcome, the gracious looke that we are like to have from him. He counts it an honour since he hath made such rich provision, for us to take part, and for our part shew our unwillingnesse, that such free kindnesse should be refused. We cannot honour his bounty more then to feed liberally of that he liberally sets before us. We are glad to perceive our friends upon invitation to thinke themselves wellcome. Let us open our mouth wide since *Christ* is so ready to fill it, we are not streightned in his love but in our owne hearts. *The widdowes oyle failed not till her vessels failed.* We are bidden to delight in the Lord, and in whom should we delight, but where all fullnesse is to be had to delight in? Our spirits are not so large as those blessed comforts are which we are called to the injoyment of. If the capacity of our soules were a thousand times larger, yet there is so large a sea of comfort

2 King. 4. 6.

in

in *Christ*, as they are not able to comprehend it, a taste of these good things breed *joy unspeakable*, and *peace that passeth understanding*; what will the fullnesse doe? This taste we feele in the ordinances will bring us to that fullnesse hereafter. O let us keepe our appetites for these things which are so delightfull, so sutable to the soule. How great is that goodnesse which he both layes up for hereafter, and layes out for his, even here in this life. Phil. 4. 7.

In some ages of the *Church* the feasts that *Christ* hath made have beene more solemne and sumptuous then in other, thereafter as *Christ* hath been more or lesse cleerely and generally manifested. At *Christs* first comming there was a greater feast then before: because the riches of Gods love in *Christ* were then layd open, and the pale of the *Church* was inlarged by the comming in of the Gentiles: so will there be a royall feast, when the Iewes shall be converted. *Blessed* then *shall those be that shall be called to the supper of the Lamb.* Suppers are in the end of the day, and this supper shall be furnisht towards the end of the world. Rev. 19. 9.

But then will be the true magnificent supper, when all that belong to Gods election shall meet together, and feed upon that heavenly Manna for ever: then there will be nothing but marrow it selfe, and wine without all dregs; in all our contentments heere there is some mixture of the contrary; then nothing but pure quintessence. In the meane time he lets fall some Manna in this

our

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our wilderneſſe, he lets us reliſh that now; it will not putrifie as the other Manna did, but indure and make us endure for ever. *Its the* true *bread of life.*

Marke how *Chriſt* drawes his *Spouſe* on to drinke, and drinke abundantly: there is no danger of taking too much: where the ſpring is infinite, we can never draw theſe wells drie, never ſucke theſe breaſts of conſolation too much, and the more ſtrong and cheerefull we are, the better ſervice we ſhall performe, and the more accepted: delight is as ſugar, ſweete in it ſelfe, and it ſweetens all things els. The joy of the Lord is our ſtrength. Duties come of more gracefully, and religion is made more lovely in the eyes of all, when it comes forth in ſtrength and cheerefullneſſe, *Chriſt* houſe-keeping is credited hereby. *In our Fathers houſe is plenty enough.* When the Martyrs had drunke largely of this wine, it made them forget friends, riches, honours, life it ſelfe: the joy ſtirred up by it, carried them through all torments.

If any be hindered by conceipt of unworthineſſe, if affected deepely with it, let them conſider what kinde of men were compelled to the banquet, the blinde, the lame. See a lively picture of Gods mercy in the example of the *Prodigall*, he feares ſharp chiding, and the *Father provides a rich banquet*, he goeth to his Father, but the *Father runs to meete him.* Did *Chriſt* ever turne back any that came unto him, if they came out of a true ſence of their wants?

Luke 15.

Eate

Eate O friends.

Christ out of the largeneſſe of his affections multiplieth new titles and compellations [*Beloved* and *friends*] *Christ* provides a banquet, and invites his *friends* not his enemies. *Thoſe* good *things* that neither *eye hath ſeene, nor eare hath heard, that are above our conceipt to apprehend*, theſe *are provided for thoſe that love him*, not that hate him: *he mingles* an other cup *for them, a cup of wrath*, and *they are to drinke up the very dregs of it.* Friendſhip is the ſweetneſſe, intimateneſſe and ſtrength of love. In our friends our love dwells and reſts it ſelfe. Conjugall friendſhip is the ſweeteſt friendſhip. All the kinds and degrees of friendſhip meete in *Christ* towards his *Spouſe*: it is the friendſhip of a husband, of a brother, and if there be any relation in the world wherein friendſhip is, all is too little to expreſſe the love of *Christ*.

1 Cor. 2. 9.

Pſal. 75. 8.

In friendſhip there is mutuall conſent, an union of judgement and affections, there is a mutuall ſympathy in the good and ill one of another, as if there were one ſoule in two bodies: there be mutuall friends and mutuall enemies. *Doe I not hate them* (ſaith *David*) *that hate thee.* There is mutuall love of one another for their owne ſakes; in flattery men love themſelves moſt; in ſemblance love others but all is in reflection to themſelves.

Pſal. 139. 21.

There is liberty which is the life of friendſhip, there

there is a free intercourse betweene friends, a free opening of secrets: so heere *Christ* openeth his secrets to us, and we to him, we acquaint him with the most hidden thoughts of our hearts, and we lay open all our cares and desires before him: thus *Abraham* was called Gods friend, and the Disciples *Christs* friends. It is the office of the Spirit to reveale the secrets of *Christ* heart to us, concerning our owne salvation; he doth not reveale himselfe to the world.

In friendship there is mutuall solace and comfort one in another. *Christ* delighteth himselfe in his love to his *Church*, and his *Church* delighteth her selfe in her love to *Christ*. *Christs* delight was to be with the sonnes of men, and ours is to be with him.

In friendship there is a mutuall honour and respect one of another; but here is some difference in this friendship, for though *Christ* calls us friends, and therein in some sort brings himselfe downe to us, yet we must remember that this is a friendship of unequalls: *Christs* honouring of us is his putting honour upon us: our honouring of him, is the giving him the *honour due to his name*. This friendship must be maintained by due respect on our parts. As he is our friend, so he is our King, and knowes how to correct us if we forget our distance. If he heere seeme to use us hardly, it is that he may use us the more kindly after: he suffers much for us, therefore we may well allow him the liberty of seasonable correcting of us.

He

He that inspireth friendship into others, will undoubtedly keepe the lawes of friendship himselfe, will count our enemies his enemies. The enemies of the Church shall one day know that the Church is not friendlesse.

And as his friendship is sweet, so constant in all conditions; he useth not his friends as we do flowers, regard them onely when they are fresh: but he breeds that in us, that may make us such as he may still delight in us; if other friends faile (as friends may faile) yet this friend will never faile us: if we be not ashamed of him, he will never be ashamed of us. How comfortable would our life be, if we could draw out the comfort that this title of *friend* affordeth: It is a comfortable, a fruitfull, an eternall friendship.

I sleepe, but my heart waketh.

Here the Church expresseth a changeable passage of her spirituall condition after she had recovered her selfe out of a former desertion; expressed in the beginning of the third Chapter, and enjoyed a comfortable intercourse with Christ; now she falleth into a deeper desertion and temptation, from the remainder of corruption getting strength. The Church now falleth asleepe, then was awake in the night and sought her beloved, here is no present awaking, no seeking, there no misusage by the watchmen as here, there she findeth him more speedily, here she fals sick with love before Christ discovereth himself. 1 2 3

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Before we come to the words, obſerve in generall,

Obſerv. 1. *That the ſtate of the Church and every Chriſtian is ſubject to ſpirituall alterations.* The Church is alwaies *beloved*, a *ſpouſe*, a *friend*; but in this one ſtate there falleth out variety of changes. No creature ſubject to ſo many changes as man; from a ſtate of innocency he fell into a ſtate of corruption, from that he by grace is reſtored to a ſtate of grace, and from grace to glory, where his condition ſhall be as Chriſts now is, and as heaven the place is, altogether unchangeable. And in that ſtate of grace how many intercourſes be there, the foundation of Gods love to us, and grace in us alwaies remaining the ſame, once beloved, for ever beloved.

We ſee here after a feaſt the Church falleth aſleepe, ſee it in *Abraham*, ſometimes *ſtrong in faith*, ſometimes fearefull. *David* ſometimes ſtanding, ſometimes falling, ſometimes recovering himſelfe and ſtanding faſter, ſometimes triumphing, *the Lord is the light of my countenance, whom ſhall I feare*; Pſal. 27. 1. ſometimes againe, *I ſhall one day fall by the hands of Saul*, 1 Sam. 27. 1. in the very ſame Pſalme he begins with *Rebuke me not in thy wrath*, Pſal. 6. and ends with *Away ye wicked*. *Elias*, though *zealous*, yet after *flies for his life*. So *Iob*, *Peter*, ſomtimes *reſolute* and *valiant*, otherwhile *ſinks for feare*.

The Reaſon. The ground is by reaſon of variety of outward occurrences working upon the diverſity of principles in us nature and grace, both nature and grace

grace are alwaies active in us in ſome degree, when corruption gets ſtrength, then we find a ſicke ſtate creeping upon us, and loſe our former frame. It's with the ſoule as with the body, in a certaine period of time it gathereth ill humours which breake out into aguiſh diſtempers at length: ſo the reliques of a ſpirituall diſeaſe not carried away, will ripen and gather to a head. This ſhould teach us when we are well to ſtudy to keepe an even courſe, and to watch over the firſt ſtirrings: and likewiſe if we ſee ſome unevenneſſe in our wayes, not to cenſure our ſelves or others over harſhly. Exact evenneſſe is to be ſtriven after here, but to be enjoyed in another world.

2. We ſee by comparing the ſtate of the Church here with the ſtate of it in the third Chapter, that where corruption is not thorowly purged, and a carefull watch kept over the ſoule, there after a recovery will follow a more dangerous diſtemper, corruption will not onely ſtrive for life, but for rule. If there had beene a thorow reformation in the Church after her former trouble, and a thorow cloſing with Chriſt, ſhe would not thus have fallen into a more dangerous condition. We ſee *David* in his later times fals to *numbring of the people*; and *Samſon* after he had done great ſervices for the Church, at length ſhamefully betrayes his ſtrength; and he that had ruled others, ſubmits to be ruled by a baſe ſtrumpet. *Ionas* for not thorough repenting for his running from his calling,

Obſerv. 2.

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calling, falls after to quarrell with God himſelfe. It is the beſt therefore to deale thorowly with our hearts, els fleſh unſubdued will owe us a greater ſhame, and we ſhall diſhonour our owne beginnings. Yet this is the comfort, that this will occaſion deeper humility, and hatred of ſin in thoſe that are Gods, and a faſter cleaving to God than ever before, as we ſee in the Church here: afterwards grace will have the better at laſt.

3. *Obſerv.* 3. We may obſerve the ingenuity of the Church in laying open her owne ſtate. It is the diſpoſition of Gods people to be ingenuous in opening their ſtate to God, as in *David, Nehemiah, Ezra*, &c.

The reaſon is thus.

1. By a free and full confeſſion we give God the honour of his wiſdome in knowing of our owne condition ſecret and open, we give him the honour of mercy that will not take advantage againſt us, the honour of power and authority over us, if he ſhould ſhew his ſtrength againſt us. We yeeld unto him the glory of all his chiefe prerogatives, whereupon *Ioſhua* mooveth *Achan* to a free confeſſion, *My ſonne, give glory to God.*

2. We ſhame Satan, who firſt takes away ſhame of ſinning, and then takes away ſhame for ſinne, he tempts us not to be aſhamed to do that we are aſhamed to confeſſe; ſo we by ſilence keepe Satans counſell againſt our owne ſoules. If we accuſe our ſelves, we put him out of office,

fice, who is *the accuser of the brethren.*

3. We prevent likewise malicious imputations from the world, *Austin* answered roundly and well when he was upbraided with the sinnes of his former age: what, thou (saith he) findest fault with, I have condemned in my selfe before.

Quæ tu reprehendis ego damnavi.

4. This ingenuous dealing easeth the soule, giving vent to the griefe of it: whiles the arrowes head stickes in the wound, it will not heale: Sin unconfessed is like a broken peece of rusty iron in the body, it must be gotten out, els it will by rankling and festring cause more danger. It is like poyson in the stomach, if it be not presently cast up, it will infect the whole body. Is it not better to take shame to our selves now, than to be shamed hereafter before Angels, Divels and Men? How carefull is God of us, by this private way to prevent future shame?

Ferrum in vulnere.

5. This faithfull dealing with our selves is oft a meanes of present delivery out of any trouble. *David* in the 32 *Psalme* 4. was in a great distemper both of body and spirit; his moysture was turned into the drought of summer. It is thought he made this Psalme betweene the time of his sinne and his pardon. What course taketh he? *I said* (saith he) that is, *I resolved to confesse my sinne, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sinne.* Upon a free and full, a faithfull, and ingenuous confession, without *all guile of spirit*, he found ease presently both in soule and body. The cause of Gods severe dealing with

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us is that we ſhould deale ſeverely with our ſelves, the beſt triall of Religion in us is by thoſe actions whereby we reflect on our ſelves by judging and condemning of our ſelves: for this argueth a ſpirit without guile. Sin and ſhifting came into the world together. The ſubtilty of proud nature, eſpecially in eminency, is ſuch, that ſinnes may paſſe for vertues; becauſe ſinne and Satan are alike in this, they cannot indure to appeare in their owne colour and habit; and ſo thoſe that oppoſe it ſhall be accounted oppoſers of good. This *guile of ſpirit* hath no *bleſſednesſe* belonging to it, take heed of it.

4. Marke further one ſigne of a gracious ſoule, to be abaſed for leſſer defects, ſleepineſſe and indiſpoſition to good. One would thinke drowſineſſe were no ſuch great matter; O but the Church had ſuch ſweet acquaintance with Chriſt, that every little indiſpoſition that hindered any degree of communion was grievous to her. You ſhall have a *Iudas*, a *Saul*, an enormious offender confeſſe great falls that gripe his conſcience; all ſhall be caſt up, that the conſcience being disburdened may feele a little eaſe: but how few have you humbled for dulneſſe of ſpirit, want of love, of zeale, and cheerfulneſſe in duty: This accompanied with ſtrife againſt it, argues a good ſpirit indeed.

A carnall man is not more humbled for groſſe ſinnes, than a gracious Chriſtian for wants in good actions, when it is not with him as it hath been, and as he would. The reaſon is, where there

there is a cleare and heavenly light, there leſſer motes are diſcernable: and ſpirituall life is ſenſible of any obſtruction and hinderance. This goeth in the world for unneceſſary nicety: the world ſtraineth not at theſe gnats: But thoſe, upon whoſe hearts the Sun of righteouſneſſe hath ſhined, have both a cleare ſight and a tender heart.

To come to the words; [*I ſleep*] The Church fetcheth a compariſon from the body to expreſſe the ſtate of the ſoule. It is one uſe of our body to helpe us in ſpirituall expreſſions. Whilſt the ſoule dwelleth in the body, it depends much in the conceiving of things upon the phantaſie, and the phantaſie upon the ſenſes. We come to conceive of ſpirituall ſleep by ſleep of the body, which we are well enough acquainted with.

The Church, as ſhe conſiſts of a double principle, fleſh and ſpirit mingled together in all parts, as darkneſſe and light in the twilight and dawning of the day, ſo here ſhe expreſſeth her condition in regard of either part, ſo farre as ſhe was carnall, ſhe ſlept, ſo farre as ſhe was ſpirituall, ſhe was awake.

In this mixt condition the fleſh for the preſent prevailed, yet ſo as the ſpirit had its working, *ſhe ſlept, but her heart waked.*

The words containe a confeſſion, *I ſleep*, and a correction, *but my heart waketh.* She hath a double aſpect, one to the ill, *her ſleeping*: the other to her good, *her heart in ſome degree awaked.*

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The Spirit of God is a diſcerning ſpirit, it diſcovereth what is fleſh and what is ſpirit.

So that we muſt not conceive this ſleep to be that dead ſleep all men are in by nature, nor to be that judiciall ſleepe, that ſpirit of ſlumber which is a further degree of that naturall ſleep to which God giveth up ſome as a ſeale of their deſperate condition, but here is meant that ſleepe that ariſeth out of the remainder of corruption unſubdued, and now is here in the Church prevailing over the better part. Fleſh and Spirit have both their intercourſe in us as *Moſes* and *Amalek* had, unleſſe we ſtand upon our guard, the fleſh will get the upper ground, as we ſee here. The beſt are no further ſafe than they are watchfull.

For the cleare underſtanding of this obſerve ſome correſpondency in the reſemblance, wherein too much curioſity is lothſome and poſtill-like, and calleth the mind too much from the kernell to the ſhell.

The reſemblance between bodily and ſpirituall ſleep.

Bodily and ſpirituall ſleepe reſemble each the other in the cauſes, in the effects, and in the dangerous iſſue.

I

The ſleepe of the body commeth from the obſtruction and binding up of the ſenſes by vapours which ariſe out of the ſtomacke: So there be ſpirituall fumes of worldly cares and deſires that obſtruct the ſenſes of the ſoule: therefore our bleſſed Saviour counts it a ſpirituall ſurfetting, when the ſoule is oppreſſed with care about the world; luſts bring the ſoule a bed:

Luk. 21. 34.

bed: Prosperity is a strong vapour, if it overcome not the braine, yet it weakeneth it, as strong waters do. See it in *Salomon* himselfe.

2 The Disciples fell asleepe in the garden when they were oppprest with heavinesse and sorrow, which passions will have the like effect upon the soule.

3 Sleep ariseth oft from wearinesse, and want of spirits, so there is a spirituall wearinesse arising from discouragements and too much expence of the strength of the soule upon other *matters*, upon impertinencies that concerne not the best state of the soule.

4 Some are brought asleepe by musicke, so many by flattering inticements and insinuations of others joyning with their owne flattering deceiptfull heart, are cast into a spirituall sleepe.

5 Sleepe ariseth from want of exercise, when there is a cessation from spirituall exercise about the proper object of it, there followeth a spirituall sleepe. Exercise keeps waking.

6 Sleepe ariseth oft from cold diseases, as Lethargies; from cold grosse humours; cold, earthly, grosse affections about the things here below, benumne the soule, and bring it into a heavy, drowsie, sleepy temper.

7 Sometimes sleepe is caused by some kind of poyson, especially the poyson of Aspes which kils in sleeping: and do not sinfull delights do the like to the soule? insensible evils are the most dangerous evils.

Other-

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Otherwhile slothfull yawning company dispose to sleepe, there is no more ordinary cause of spirituall sleepe, than conversing with spirituall sluggards, that count it a high point of wisdome not to be forward in religion. These formall proud persons, as they are cold themselves, so they labour to cast water upon the heat of others. Nay those that are otherwise good, if declining in their first love, will incline others to a fellowship in the same secure temper, least they should be upbraided by the vigilancy of others.

8

1 They are alike in the effects. Men disposed to be asleep desire to be alone. Those likewise that are disposed to take a spirituall nap, will avoid company, especially of such as would awake them. They will hardly indure rowzing meanes.

2 Men will draw the curtains and shut out light, when they meane to compose themselves to rest. So when men favour themselves in some wayes not allowable, they are afraid to be disquieted by the light; light both discovereth, awaketh, and stirres up to working: And men when they are loth to do what they know, are loth to know what they should do. *They that sleepe sleepe in the night.* *Asa*, otherwise a good King, shut up the Prophet in prison for doing his duty: Much of the anger that men beare against the word laid open to them is because it will not suffer them to sleepe quietly in their sinnes. Such as will suffer them to live quietly in their

1 Thess. 5. 7.

sinnes,

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ſinnes; they are the quiet and honeſt men. There cannot be a worſe ſigne than when men will not indure wholſome words, it is a ſigne they are in an ill league with that they ſhould above all wage warre againſt.

In ſleepe phantaſie ruleth, and dreames in phantaſie; men in ſleep dreame of falſe good, and forget true danger. 3

Many cheriſh golden dreames, dreame of meat, and when they awake, their ſoule is empty. Vaine hopes are the dreames of waking men, as vaine dreams are all the waking of ſleeping and carnall men, whoſe life is but a dreame. Eſa. 29. 8.

In ſleep there is no exerciſe of ſenſes or motion: as then men are not ſenſible of good or ill, they move neither to good or ill: Motion followeth ſenſibleneſſe: what good we are not ſenſible of, we move not unto: Hence ſleep is of kin to death, for the time depriving us of the uſe of all ſenſes; and a ſecure profeſſour in appearance differs little from a dead profeſſour; both of them are unactive in good; and what they do they do it without delight, in an uncomly and unacceptable manner, unbeſeeming the ſtate of a Chriſtian. It is all one to have no ſenſes, and not to uſe them; we may ſay of men in this ſleepy temper, as the Scripture ſpeaks of idols, *they have eyes and ſee not, eares and heare not*, &c. Pſal. 115. 5.

So likewiſe they are alike in danger, in ſleep the preciouſeſt thing men carry about them is taken away without reſiſtance: and they are ready to let

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let loose what they held fast before; were it never so rich a jewel. And it is so in spirituall sleepines; men suffer the profession of the truth to be wrung from them without much with-standing, and with letting fall their watch, let fall likewise, if not their grace, yet the exercise of their graces, and are in danger to be robbed of all.

There is no danger but a man in sleepe is faire for, and exposed unto: *Sisera* was slaine asleep, and *Ishbosheth* at noone day, and there is no temptation, no sinne, no judgement, but a secure drowzy Christian is open for; which is the ground of so oft inforcing watchfulnesse by the Spirit of God in the Scriptures. As spirituall deadnesse of spirit is a cause of other sinne, so likewise it is a punishment of them; God powreth a spirit of *dead sleepe upon men, and closeth up their eyes*, till some heavy judgement falleth upon them, and how many carnall men never awake in this world, till they awake in hell! No wonder therefore that Satan labours to cast men into a dead sleep all that he can, and deludes them with dreames of a false good, that their estate is good, and like so to continue, that to morrow shall be as to day, that no danger is neare, though Gods wrath hangeth over their head, ready to be revealed frō heaven

2 Sam. 4. 7.

Esa. 29. 10.

Thus we see how the resemblance holds. Some apply this to *Constantines* time about three hundred yeares after Christ, when the Church upon peace and plenty grew secure, and suffered Ecclesiasticall abuses to creepe in. Religion begat

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begat plenty, and the daughter devoured the mother. This made the Writers of the Eccleſiaſticall Stories to queſtion, whether the Church hath more hurt by open perſecution, or peace, when one Chriſtian undermineth and rageth againſt another. Humane inventions were ſo multiplied, that not long after in *Auguſtines* time, he complained that the condition of the Iews was more tolerable than theirs, for though the Iews were under burdens, yet they were ſuch as were *impoſed* by *God himſelfe*, and not *humane preſumptions*. But *Gerſon* many hundred yeares after increaſeth his complaint. If (O *Auguſtine*) thou ſaidſt thus in thy time, what wouldeſt thou have ſaid if thou hadſt lived now, when men (as a toy taketh them in the head) will multiply burdens? And he was not afraid to ſay, that the number of humane conſtitutions was ſuch, that if they were obſerved in rigour, the greateſt part of the Church would be damned. Thus whilſt the husbandmen ſlept, the envious man Satan ſlept not, but ſew his tares. Thus Popery grew up by degrees, till it overſpread the Church. Whilſt the watchmen that ſhould have kept others awake, fell aſleep themſelves. And thus we anſwer the Papiſts, whē they quarrell with us about the beginning of their errors. They ask of us when ſuch and ſuch an hereſie began: we anſwer, that thoſe that ſhould have obſerved them, were aſleep. Popery is a myſtery that crept into the Church by degrees vnder glorious pretences. Their errours had modeſt beginnings.

Theodoret. lib. 5.

Auguſt. ad Ianuar. Epiſt. 119. *Tolerabilior Iudæorum conditio quam noſtra.*

Si tuo tempore hæc dicebas (O ſapiens Auguſtine) quid noſtra tempeſtate dixiſſes? Gerſon de vit. ſpiritual. *Si tenerentur in ſuo rigore, maxima pars Eccleſiæ damnaretur*

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beginnings. Worshipping of images arose from reserving the pictures of friends; and after that were brought into the Church. Invocation of Saints arose from some of the Fathers figurative turning of their speech to some that were dead. Transubstantiation had rise from some transcendent unwary phrases of the Fathers. The Papacy it selfe from some titles of the Romish Church and Bishop. Nothing in Popery so grosse, but had some small beginnings, which being neglected by those that should have watched over the Church, grew at length unsufferable. No wonder if the Papists be cast into a dead sleep, they have drunk too deep of the whores cup. They that worship Images, are (as the Scripture saith) *like unto them, they have eyes and see not*, &c. They cannot discerne of their errours, though they be never so ridiculous and senslesse, as prayer in an unknowne tongue, and such like.

And upon this state of the Church let us add this caution.

A Caution.

If the best men be so prone to sleep, then we cannot safely at all times build upon their judgement. The Fathers of the Church were not alwaies awake. There be few of them, but in some things we may appeale from themselves sleeping, to themselves waking. The best having some darknesse left in their understandings, and some lusts unsubdued in their affections, may write and speak somtimes out of the worst part and principle that is in them, as well as out of the

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the beſt, when they keepe not cloſe to the rule.

When our adverſaries preſſe us with the authority of Fathers, we appeale to them where they ſpeak adviſedly and of purpoſe. When they were not awaked by heretiques, they ſpeake ſomtimes unworthily, and give advantages to heretiques that followed. It is the manner of our adverſaries to make the unwarrantable practice of the ancienter time a rule of their practice, and the doubtfull opinions of the ancients their owne grand tenets. Wherein in both they deale unſafely for themſelves, and injuriouſly towards us, when we upon grounds in ſome things diſſent, which liberty (oft when they ſhould not) they will take to themſelves.

Patres in maximis ſunt noſtri, in multis varij, in minimis veſtri. Wh.

But howſoever this ſleepy condition agreeth to the former times of the Church, yet I wiſh there were not cauſe to apply it to our ſelves, in this latter age of the Church, wherein many of the ancient hereſies are revived; and beſides, the evils that accompany long peace, take hold of us, and will prevaile too farre if we do not rowze up our ſelves. The Church is in the common-wealth, and uſually they flowriſh and fall together. When there is a ſleep of the Church, for the moſt part there is a ſleep of the State. A civill ſleep is, when in grounds of danger there is no apprehenſion of danger, and this ſleep is a puniſhment of ſpirituall ſleep, when with *Ephraim* a State hath *gray haires and knoweth it*

Iſa. 7. 9.

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it not, when judgements abroad will not awake men. When noiſe and pinching will not awake, the ſleep muſt needs be deep. The whole world almoſt is in combuſtion round about us, and many countries thought themſelves as ſafe a little before their troubles, as we now think our ſelves. If feare of outward dangers will not awake, then ſpirituall dangers will not, as being more ſecret and not obvious to ſenſe. No wonder then if few will believe our report of the fearefull condition of wicked men in the world to come. A man may be ſtartled & awaked with outward dangers that is ſpiritually ſottiſh, but he that is careleſſe of outward danger, will be regardleſſe of what we ſay in ſpirituall dangers. The feare of danger may be the greater, when (as it was amongſt the Iewes) thoſe that ſhould be watchfull themſelves, & awake others, inſtead of awaking rock the cradle, & cry *peace, peace, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord*, yet we muſt never forget to be mindfull with thankfulneſſe for peace and the Goſpell of peace which yet by Gods bleſſing we enjoy, alwaies ſuſpecting the readineſſe of nature to grow ſecure under the abundance of favours, and ſo to bleſſe our ſelves in that condition.

Signes of a ſleepy ſtate.

1. Now we know that ſleep is creeping upon us, by comparing our preſent condition with our former, when we were in a more wakefull frame. When the graces of Gods Spirit were in exerciſe in us. If we differ from that we were, then all is not well.

2. Com-

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2. Compare our selves againe with that state and frame that a Christian should bee in: for sometimes a Christian goes under an uncomfortable condition, all the daies of his life, so that hee is not fit to make himselfe his patterne. The true rule is, that description that is in the word of a waking and living Christian, what should a man be, take him at the best, the varying from that is a sleepie estate; as for instance, A Christian should walke *in the Comfort of the Holy Ghost*, live and walke by faith, hee should depend upon God, and resist temptations. Faith should worke by love, and love to our selves should move us to honour our selves as members of Christ, to disdaine to defile our selves by sinne, our hope if it bee waking will purge us and make us sutable to the condition we hope for in Heaven, and the Company we hope to have fellowship with there. Acts 9.39.

3. Againe, look to the examples of others that are more gratious, I have as many incouragements to bee thankfull to God, and fruitfull, they enjoy no more meanes then I, and yet they abound in assurance, are comfortable in all conditions, I am downe in a little trouble, subject to passion, to barrennesse, and distrust, as if there were no promises of God made to sowing in righteousnesse, thus a man may discerne hee is a sleepe by comparing himselfe with others that are better then himselfe.

4. Againe, it's evident that we are *growing on* to a sleepie condition by this, when wee

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finde a backwardneſſe to ſpirituall duties, as to prayer, thankeſgiving, and ſpirituall conference, it ſhould bee the joy of a Chriſtian, (as it is his prerogative) to come into the preſence of Chriſt and to be inabled to doe that, that is above himſelfe. When what is ſpirituall in a duty will not downe with us, it is a ſigne our ſoules are in a ſleepie temper, there is not a proportion betweene the ſoule and the buſineſſe in heavenly duties, whom doe we ſpeake to but God, whom doe we heare ſpeake in the Word but God, what ſhould be the temper of thoſe that ſpeake to God, and heare him ſpeake to them, it ſhould be regardfull, reverent, obſervant, thoſe that are watchfull to the eye of a Prince, what obſervance they ſhew, when they are to receive any thing from him or to put up any requeſt to him, *Offer this to thy King*, ſaith the Lord by *Malachy*, when a man comes drowſily to God, to ſacrifice, to heare, to pray, *&c.* offer this cariage to man, will hee take it at thy hands. Oh the mercy of our patient God, that will indure ſuch ſervices as we moſt frequently performe! by this indiſpoſedneſſe to duty more or leſſe, may wee diſcover our ſleepineſſe.

Mal. 1. 8.

5. When the ſoule begins to admire outward excellencies, when it awakes much to profits, pleaſures, and honours, when men admire great men, rich men, great places, the ſtrength and fat of the ſoule are conſumed by feeding on theſe things, ſo that when it comes to ſpirituall

things

things it must needs be faint and drowsie. By these and the like signes, let us labour to search the state of our soules.

Motives against sleepinesse. 1.

1. And to stirre us up the more, Consider the danger of a secure sleepie estate, there is no sin but a man is exposed unto in a secure estate, therefore the divell labours all hee can to cast men into this temper, which he must doe before he can make him fall into any grosse sinne, when hee is asleepe hee is in a fit frame for any ill action, he is in a temper fit for the divell to worke upon, to bring into any dreame or error, to inflame the fancies and conceits with outward excellencies, the divell hath a faculty this way, to make outward things great that are nothing worth, and to make such sinnes little, as if we were awake would affright us; hee workes strongest upon the fancie, when the soule is sleepie or a little drowsie.

There is no man that comes to grosse sins suddenly, but hee falls by little and little, first to slumber, and from slumber to sleepe, and from sleepe to security, and so from one degree to another: it is the inlet to all sinnes, and the beginning of all danger, therefore the Lord takes a contrary course with his, when hee would preserve a state or person he plants in them first a spirit of faith to beleeve that there is such a danger, or such a good to bee apprehended, upon watching and going on in a course befitting that condition, and then faith (if it bee a matter of threatning) stirres up feare

which maketh up care and diligence, this is Gods method, when hee intends the preſervation of any.

2. A man in his ſleepe is fit to looſe all, a ſleepie hand lets any thing goe with eaſe. A man hath grace and comfort, hee lets it goe in his ſpirituall ſleepineſſe, grace in a great meaſure, and the ſenſe and comfort of it altogether. A Chriſtian hath alwaies the divine nature in him that workes in ſome degree, yet notwithſtanding in regard of his preſent temper and feeling, he may be in ſuch a caſe, that he ſhall differ nothing from a reprobate, nay hee may come to feele more then any ordinary wicked man feeles whiles he lives in the world; as divers good Chriſtians doe. And all this, through their careleſneſſe, that they ſuffer themſelves to bee robbed of firſt beginnings, by yeelding to delights, company and contentments; feeding their conceits with carnall excellencies, ſo favouring corruptions, and flattering that that is naught in them, they looſe the comfort of all that is good: who would doe this for the gaining of a little broken ſleepe, I ſay broken ſleepe, for the better a man is, the more unquietly ſhall he ſleepe in ſuch a ſtate, he ſhall feele ſtartlings and frights in the middeſt of his carnall delights if he belong to God.

3. Beſides, God meets them with ſome croſſes in this world, that they ſhall gaine nothing by it. There is none of Gods children, that ever gained by yeelding to any corruption, or drow-

drowsinesse; though God saved their soules. It is alwaies true, a secure state is a sure forerunner of some great crosse, or of some great sinne. God cannot endure such a temper of soule, liveleſſe and unfeeling performances and sacrifices, to him that hath given us such incouragements; It must needs be distastfull to God when we goe drowsily and heavily about *His* worke. *Cursed is he that doth the worke of the Lord negligently*, if it were to sheath his sword in the bowels of his enemy, to which man is exceedingly prone, yet if it bee not done with diligence and an eye to God, a man is cursed in it. Jer. 48. 10.

4. And it is an odious temper to God; for doth not hee deserve cheerefull service at our hands? hath he beene a wilderneſſe to us? doth he not deserve the marrow of our soules? doth not his greatneſſe require it at our hands, that our sences bee all waking? and doth not his mercy deserve, that our love should take all care, to serve him that is so gratious and good to us? Is it not the fruit of our redemption to serve him without feare in holineſſe and righteousneſſe all the daies of our lives. 4 Luke 1. 74.

5. It is a state not onely odious to God, but irksome to our owne spirits, the Conscience is never fully at peace in a drowsie state or in drowsie performances.

Likewise it is not gracefull to others, it breeds not love in them to good things, but dislike. Carnall men, let them see a Christian not carry him-

himſelfe waking as he ſhould, though they bee a thouſand times worſe themſelves, yet notwithſtanding they think it ſhould not be ſo, ſuch a courſe doth not ſute with ſo much knowledge and ſo much grace.

Let a man conſider, wherefore God hath given the powers of the ſoule and the graces of the Spirit, are they not given for exerciſe and to bee imployed about their proper objects? a man is not a man, a Chriſtian is not a Chriſtian when he is not waking, he ſo farre degenerates from himſelfe, as he yeelds unto any unbeſeeming carriage; wherefore hath God given us *underſtanding*, but to conceive the beſt things, wherfore have we *Iudgement*, but to judge aright betweene the things of Heaven and Earth, wherefore have we *love* planted in us, but to ſet it on lovely objects, wherefore *faith*, but to truſt God over all, wherefore *hatred*, but to fly ill, wherefore have we *affections*, but for ſpirituall things; when therefore our affections are dull, and looſe their edge to theſe things, being quick onely to earthly things, what a temper is this, how doth a man anſwer his Creation, the ſtate of a new Creature, wherefore are all graces planted in the ſoule, as faith and love, and hope and patience, but to be in exerciſe, and waking; to have theſe and to let them ſleepe and lie unexerciſed, ſo farre a Chriſtian forgets himſelfe, and is not himſelfe, a Chriſtian as a Chriſtian, that is, in his right temper ſhould bee in the act and exerciſe of what is good in him,

upon

upon all occasions, as we say of God, hee is a pure Act, because hee is allwaies in working, the Spirit of God is a pure act, in whom is no suffering but all action, about that that is fit for so glorious a nature; So it is with the spirit of a man, that hath the Spirit of God, hee is in act, in exercise, in operation, as the Spirit is more or lesse in him, so he is more or lesse in operation, more or lesse fruitfull, what a world of good might Christians doe, if they were in a right temper, what a deale of ill might they escape and avoid that they lie in, if they would rouze up their soules to be as Christians should be, and as their soule and Conscience tells them, they ought and might be, did they rightly improve the meanes they have.

THE FOVRTH SERMON.

CANT. V. VER. II.

I sleepe but my heart wakes, &c.

THE words as it hath beene shewed containe a *Confession, I sleepe,* and a *Correction,* my *heart waketh.* The confession hath been handled, now something of the correction or exception.

My heart waketh.

The word *heart* you know includes the whole soule, for the *understanding* is the heart, *an understanding heart.* To lay things up in our *hearts*, there it is *memorie*, and to *cleave in heart* is to cleave in *will.* To *rejoyce in heart*, that is in the *affection*, so that all the powers of the soule, the Inward man, (as *Paul* calleth it) is the heart.

I ſleepe but my heart waketh.

Indeed, the Church might have ſaid, my heart ſleepeth, but my heart waketh: for it is the ſame facultie, the ſame power of the ſoule, both in the ſtate of Corruption, and of grace, in which the ſoule is, as in the twy-light, wee cannot ſay, this is light, and that is darkeneſſe, becauſe there is ſuch a mixture. In all the powers of the ſoule, there is ſomething good, and ſomething ill, ſomething fleſh, and ſomething ſpirit. The heart was aſleepe, and likewiſe was awake. I

Obſer. 1. ſleepe but my heart waketh; you ſee here then firſt of all in this correction; That a Chriſtian hath two principles in him, that which is good, and that which is evill, whence iſſueth the weakeneſſe of his actions, and affections, They are all mixed, as are the principles from which they come forth, wee may obſerve further,

Obſer. 2. that a Chriſtian man may know how it is with himſelfe, though he be mixed of fleſh, and ſpirit, he hath a diſtinguiſhing knowledge and judgement whereby he knowes both the good, and evill in himſelfe. In a dungeon where is nothing but darkeneſſe both on the eye that ſhould ſee, and on that which ſhould bee ſeene, he can ſee nothing: but where there is a ſupernaturall principle, where there is this mixture, there the light of the ſpirit ſearcheth the darke corners of the heart; A man that hath the ſpirit knoweth

knoweth both, he knoweth himſelfe and his owne heart. The Spirit hath a light of its owne, even as Reaſon hath, how doth Reaſon know what it doth; By a reflect act Inbred in the ſoule, ſhall a man that is naturall reflect upon his ſtate, and know what hee knowes, what hee thinkes, what hee doth, and may not the ſoule that is raiſed to an higher eſtate know as much? undoubtedly it may. Beſides we have the Spirit of God, which is light, and ſelfe-evidencing, it ſhewes unto us, where it is, and what it is. The worke of the Spirit may ſometimes bee hindered, as in times of temptation, then I confeſſe a man may looke wholy upon corruption, and ſo miſtake himſelfe, in judging by that which hee ſees preſent in himſelfe, and not by the other principle which is concealed for a time from him. But a Chriſtian, when he is not in ſuch a temptation, he knowes his owne eſtate, and can diſtinguiſh betweene the principles in him of the fleſh and ſpirit, grace and nature.

How the diſcerning worke of the Spirit commeth to be ſo interrupted.

Againe we ſee heere in, that the Church ſaith, *but my heart waketh*, that ſhee doth acknowledge there is good as well as evill; As the Church is ingenious to confeſſe that which is amiſſe, *I ſleepe*, ſo ſhe is as true in confeſſing that which is good in her ſelfe; *but my heart waketh*, which yeelds us another obſervation.

Obſer. 3.

Wee ſhould as well acknowledge that which is good, as that which is evill in our hearts.

Becauſe

SER .IIII.

Becauſe wee muſt not beare falſe witneſſe (as not againſt others) much leſſe againſt our ſelves. Many helpe Satan the accuſer and plead his cauſe againſt the Spirit their Comforter; in refuſing to ſee what God ſeeth in them. Wee muſt make conſcience of this, to know the good as well as the evill, though it be never ſo little.

What the Church acknowledgeth in her heart waking though aſleepe.

To come in particular, what is that good the Church here confeſſeth, when ſhee ſaith, that *her heart waketh?* Shee in her ſleepie eſtate, firſt hath her judgement ſound in that which is truth of perſons, things, and courſes. Chriſtians are not ſo benighted when they ſleepe, or given up to ſuch a reprobate judgement, as that they diſcerne not differences: they can diſcerne that ſuch are in a good way, and ſuch are not; that ſuch meanes are good, and ſuch are not; a Chriſtian oft times is forced to doe worke out of judgement, in caſe his affections are aſleep or diſtracted, and ſuch workes are approved of God, as they come from a right judgement and conviction, though the evill of them be chaſtiſed.

A choice of good remaineth in the will.

But all is not in the judgement. The child of God aſleep hath a working in the will, chooſing the better part which he will cleave too, he hath a generall purpoſe, *to pleaſe God in all things*, and no ſetled purpoſe in particular for to ſleepe thus: anſwerable to his judgement therefore he chooſeth the better part, and ſide, he ownes God, and his cauſe, even in evill times, cleaving in reſolution of heart to the beſt wayes, though with weakeneſſe.

Take

Take David in his sleepie time betweene his repentance, and his foule sinne, if one should have asked him what he thought of the wayes of God, and of the contrary, he would have given you an answer out of sound judgement thus and thus, If you should have asked him what course he would have followed in his choice resolution, and purpose, hee would have answered savourly.

Againe there remaineth affection answerable to their judgement, which though they finde, and feele it not for a time, it being perhaps scattered, yet there is a secret love to Christ, and to his cause, and side, joyned with joy in the well-fare of the Church and people of God, rejoycing in the prosperity of the righteous, with a secret greefe for the contrarie. The pulses will beate this way, and good affections will discover themselves, take him in his sleepie estate, the judgement is sound in the maine, the will, the affections, the joy, the delight, the sorrow, this is an evidence his *heart is awake.*

3. They retaine affection answerable to their judgement.

The Conscience likewise is awake; the heart is taken oft times for the conscience in Scripture, a good Conscience (called a *merry heart*) *is a continuall feast*; Now the conscience of Gods children is never so sleepie, but it awaketh in some comfortable measure, though perhaps it may be deaded in a particular act, yet notwithstanding there is so much life in it, as upon speech, or conference, *&c.* there will be an opening of it and a yeelding at the length to the strength

4. Conscience.

Prov. 15. 15.

How the Conscience in a sleepie temper is knowne to be awake.

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strength of spirituall reason, his conscience is not seared; *David* was but a little rowsed by Nathan, yet you see how he presently confessed ingeniously that he had sinned; So when he had numbred the people, his conscience presently smote him, and when he resolved to kill Naball and all his familie, which was a wicked, and carnall passion, in which there was nothing but flesh, yet when he was stopped by the advise, and the discreet counsell of *Abigall*, we see how presently he yeelded. There is a kinde of perpetuall tenderneſse of conscience in Gods people, all the difference is; of more, or lesse.

2 Sam. 24.

1 Sam. 23.

5.

So they retaine also a course of obedience.

And answerable to these invvard povvers is the outvvard obedience of Gods children, in their sleepie estate, they goe on in a course of obedience, though deadly and coldly, and not vvith that glory that may give others good example, or yeeld themselves comfort, yet there is a course of good duties, his ordinarie vvay is good, hovvsoever he may step aside, his fits may be sleepie vvhen his estate is vvaking. We must distinguish betvveene a state and a fit, a man may have an Aguish fit in a sound body; The state of a Christian is a vvaking state in the Invvard man, the by courses he falleth into are but fits out of vvhich he recovers himselfe.

That we must distinguish betweene states and fits.

Vse. 1. Whence for use let us magnifie the goodnesse of God, that vvill remaine by his Spirit, and let it stay to preserve life in such hearts as ours are, so prone to security, and sleepinesse, let it put us in mind of other like mercifull and gracious doings

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of our God for us: that he gave his Spirit to us when we had nothing good in us, when it met with nothing, but enmity, rebellion, and indispoſedneſſe; Nay conſider how he debaſed himſelfe and became man, in being united to our fraile fleſh after an admirable neereneſſe, and all out of mercy to ſave us.

If ſo bee that Satan ſhall tempt us in ſuch occaſions, *let us enter into our owne ſoules, and ſearch the truth of Grace*, our judgement, our wills, our conſtant courſe of obedience, and the inward principle whence it comes; that we may be able to ſtand in the time of temptation. What upheld the *Church*, but this reflect act by the helpe of the Spirit, that ſhee was able to judge of the good, as well as of the ill, thus *David*; *The deſires of our ſoule are towards thee*, and though all this have befallen us, yet have we not forgotten thy Name, *Pſal.* 44.20. this will inable us to appeale to God as *Peter*, Lord thou knoweſt I love thee, it is an evidence of a good eſtate. *Vſe.* 2.

My heart waketh.

Gods children never totally fall from grace, though they ſleepe yet their heart is awake. The prophet Eſay ſpeaking of the Church and children of God, *Eſa.* 6.13. ſaith, *It ſhall be as a tree, as an oake whoſe ſubſtance is in them, when they caſt their leaves.* Though you ſee neither fruit, nor leaves, yet there is life in the root, *The ſeed remaines in them*, there is allway a ſeed remaining, *Obſer.*

it

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it is an immotall ſeed that we are begotten by. *Peter* when he denied his Maſter, was like an Oake, that was weather-beaten, yet there was life ſtill in the root. For queſtionleſſe *Peter* loved Chriſt from his heart. Sometimes a Chriſtian may be in ſuch a poore caſe as the ſpirituall life runneth all to the heart, and the outward man is left deſtitute, as in warres, when the enemie hath conquered the field, the people runne into the Citie; and if they be beaten out of the Citie they runne into the Caſtle: the grace of God ſometimes failes in the outward action, in the field, when yet it retireth to the heart, in which fort it is impregnable, *My heart waketh.*

1 Pet. 1. Matth. 26.

When the outward man ſleepes, and there are weake dull performances, and perhaps actions amiſſe too, yet notwithſtanding *the heart waketh*; As we ſee in a ſwoond or great ſcares, the blood ſpirits and life, though they leave the face and hands, *&c.* yet they are in the heart. It is ſaid in the Scripture of *Eutichus*, *his life is in him ſtill, though hee ſeemed to be dead.* As Chriſt ſaid of *Lazarus*, So a man may ſay of a Chriſtian, in his worſt ſtate, his life is in him ſtill, he is not dead, but ſleepes, *his heart waketh.*

Simile. Acts. 20. 9. Ioh 11,

Obſer.

This is a ſound Doctrine and comfortable, agreeable to Scripture, and the experience of Gods people, we muſt not looſe it therefore: but make uſe of it againſt the time of temptation. There are ſome pulſes that diſcover life in the ſickeſt man, ſo are there ſome breathings and ſpirituall motions of heart, that will comfort

fort in such times. These two never faile on Gods part, his *love* which is unchangiable, and his grace a fruit of his love; And two on our part, the impression of that love, and the gracious worke of the new creature. *Christ never dies* (saith the Apostle) as hee never dies in himselfe (after his Resurrection) so he never dies in his Children, there is alwayes spirituall life.

The heart waketh.

This is a secret of Gods Sanctuarie, only belonging to Gods people, others have nothing to doe with it, They shall ever love God and God will ever love them. The Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 14.8. saith, *Love never failes.* Guifts you know shall be abolished, because the manner of knowing we now use shall cease, *we see through a glasse*, &c. *but love abideth.* Doth our love to God abide for ever; and doth not his love to us whence it commeth? ours is but a reflection of Gods love. Let us comfort our selves therefore in this for the time to come, that in all the uncertainty of things in this life, wee have to day, and loose to morrow, as we see in *Iob*, there is somewhat a Saint may build on that is constant and unmoveable. *I am the Lord I change not, therefore you sonnes of Iacob are not consumed.* God should deny himselfe (as it were) which hee cannot doe, and his owne constant Nature, if he should variethis way.

Vse for Comfort.

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A Christian is what his heart, and inward man is, It is a true speech of Divines *God and nature beginne there.* *Art* beginns with the *face* and outward lyniaments, as hypocrisie, outward painting, and expressions: But grace at the *Center*, and from thence goes to the *Circumference*; And therefore the *Church* values her selfe here by the disposition, and temper of her heart. Thus I am for my outward carriage, *&c. I sleepe, but my heart that waketh.*

Therefore let us enter into our consciences and soules for the tryall of our estates, how it is with our judgements, Doe we allow of the wayes of God, and of the Law of the inward man? How is it with our affections, and bent to good things? How with our hatred, our zeale? Is it not more for outward things, then for inward? Wee know what *Iehu* said to *Ionadab*, when he would have him into his Chariot, *Is thine heart as mine, then come to mee?* So saith *Christ*, is thine heart as mine, then give me thy hand, but first God must have our hearts, and then our handes; A man otherwise is but a ghost in Religion, which goes up and downe without a spirit of its owne, but a picture, that hath an outside, and is nothing within. Therefore especially, let us looke to our hearts, *Oh that there were such an heart in this people* (saith God to *Moses*) *to feare me alwaies, for their good*; This is it, that Gods children desire, that their hearts may be aright set. *Wash thy heart O Ierusalem* (saith the Prophet) *from thy wickednesse*, &c.

Indeed

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Heb. 11.

Indeed all the outward man depends upon this; Therefore Satan, if he can get this fort, he is safe, and so Satans vicar · It was a watch-word, that was in *Gregorie.* 13. his time, in *Queene Elizabths* daies, *My Sonne, give me thy heart,* dissemble, goe to *Church,* and doe what you will, but *Da mihi cor,* bee in heart a Papist, and goe where you will. God is not content with the heart alone, (the Divell knowes if hee have the heart, he hath all, But God, as he made all, both soule, and body he will have all) but yet in times of temptation, the chiefe triall is in the heart.

And from hence, we may have a maine difference betweene one Christian and another. A sound Christian doth what he doth from the heart, he begins the worke there. What good he doth, he loves in his heart first, judgeth it to be good, and then he doth it.

An Hypocrite doth that he doth outwardly, and allowes not inwardly of that good he doth; hee would doe ill, and not good, if it were in his choice. The good that he doth is for by ends, for correspondence, or dependance upon others, or conformitie with the times, to cover his designes under formalitie of Religion, that he may not be knowne outwardly, as he is inwardly, an Atheist, and an Hypocrite. So he hath false aymes, his heart is not directed to a right marke; But it is otherwise with Gods child, Whatsoever good he doth, it is in his heart first, Whatsoever ill he abstaines from, he doth it from his heart,

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judging it to be naught: therefore he hates it, and will not doe it. Here is a maine difference of the *Church* from all others, It wakes in the heart, though the outward man ſleepes. But other mens hearts ſleepe, when they wake, as you know ſome men will walke and doe many things in their ſleepe. An Hypocrite is ſuch a kind of man, He walkes and goes up and downe, but his heart is aſleepe, he knowes not what he doth, nor doth he the thing out of judgement, or love, but as one aſleepe (as it were) he hath no inward affection unto the things he doth. A Chriſtian is the contrary, his heart is awake, when hee is aſleepe.

Another difference from the wordes you may have thus. A Chriſtian by the power of Gods Spirit in him, is ſenſible of the contrarieties in him, complaines, and is aſhamed for the ſame: but an Hypocrite is not ſo, hee is not ſenſible of his ſleepineſſe, *I ſleepe* (ſaith the *Church*) ſo much as the *Church* ſaith ſhee ſlept; *So much ſhee did not ſleepe*: for a man that is aſleepe, cannot ſay he is aſleepe, nor a dead man, that he is dead, *So farre, as hee ſaith hee is aſleepe, hee is awake.* Now the *Church* confeſſeth that ſhe was *aſleepe* by that part, that was *awake* in her, other men doe not complaine, are not ſenſible of their ſleepineſſe, and ſlumbring, but compoſe themſelves to ſlumber, and ſeeke darkeneſſe, which is a friend of ſleepe, they would willingly bee ignorant, to keepe their Conſcience dull, and dumbe as much as they can, that it may not upbraid

braid them. This is the disposition of a Carnall man, he is not sensible of his estate as here the Church is.

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A waking state is a blessed state. *Obser.*

The Church you see supports and comforts her selfe that she was waking in her inward man, that she was happy in that respect. How shall we do to keep & preserve our soules in this waking condition, especially in these drowsie times? *Quest.*

1. Propound unto them waking considerations, What causeth our sleepes, but want of matters of more serious observation? None will sleepe when a thing is presented of excellency more then ordinary. To see and know and thinke of what a state we are now advanced unto in *Christ*, what we shall be ere long, yet the fearefull estate we should be in, if God leave us to our selues? A state of astonishment, miserable and wretched, beyond speech, nay beyond conceit. Thus did the blessed soules in former times exercise their thoughts, raise and stirre them up by meditation, that so they might hold their soules in a high esteeme of the best things, and not suffer them to sleepe. We never fall to sleep in earthly and carnall delights, till the soule let its hould goe of the best things, and ceaseth to thinke of, and to wonder at them. What made *Moses* to fall from the delights of *Egypt*? hee saw the basest things in Religion, were greater, then the greatest things in the Court, yea in the World. *Hee esteemed the reproach of Christ better then the greatest treasures of Egypt.* Heb. 11.

Answ.

1. *Meanes*

Is to propound waking considerations.

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2. Consideration.

Luk. 19. 42. Mat. 23 37.

Iohn. 5.

3. Consideration.

2 Cor. 5. 11.

Make the *heart thinke of the ſhortneſſe, and vanity of this life,* with the uncertainty of the time of our death; and of what wondrous conſequent it is to be in the ſtate of Grace before we die. *The uncertainty of the gales of Grace,* that there may be a good houre, which if we paſſe, we may never have the like againe. As the Angell deſcended at a certaine houre into the poole of *Bethesda,* when thoſe that entred not immediatly after, went away ſicke as they came. So there are certaine good howers, which let us not neglect, this will help to keepe us waking. *The Neceſſity of Grace,* and then the free diſpenſing of it in Gods good time, and withall the terrour of the Lords day, *Remembring* (ſaith St. *Paul*) *the terror of the Lord, I labour to ſtirre up all men,* &c. Indeed it ſhould make us ſtirre up our hearts, when we conſider the terrour of the Lord, to thinke, that ere long, we ſhall be all drawn to an exact account, before a ſtrict, preciſe Judge; And ſhall our eyes then be ſleeping and careleſſe? Theſe and ſuch like conſiderations out of ſpirituall wiſdome we ſhould propound to our ſelves, that ſo we might have waking ſoules, and preſerve them in a right temper.

2. *Meanes.* To keep Faith waking.

The ſoule is as the object is that is preſented to it, and as the certainty of the apprehenſion is of that object. It conduceth much therefore to the awakening of the ſoule to keepe faith awake. It's not the greatneſſe alone, but the preſence of great things that ſtirres us; now it is the nature of faith to make things powerfully preſent to

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the ſoule: for it ſets things before us in the word of *Iehovah*, that made all things of nothing, and is Lord of his word, to give a being to whatſoever he hath ſpoken. Faith is an awakening Grace, keepe that awake, and it will keepe all other graces waking.

Heb. 11.

When a man believes, that all theſe things ſhall be on fire ere long, that *Heaven* and *Earth* ſhall fall in peeces, that we ſhall be called to give an account; before that time we may be taken away. Is it not a wonder we ſtand ſo long, when Cities, ſtone walls fall, and Kingdomes come to ſuddaine periods? When faith apprehends, and ſetts this to the eye of the ſoule, it affects the ſame marvellouſly: Therfore let faith ſet before the ſoule ſome preſent thoughts according to its temper, ſometimes terrible things to awaken it out of its dulneſſe: Sometimes glorious things, *Promiſes*, and *Mercies*, to waken it out of its ſadneſſe, *&c.* When we are in a proſperous eſtate let faith make preſent all the ſinnes and temptations that uſually accompany ſuch an eſtate, as Pride, ſecurity, ſelfe-applauſe and the like: if in adverſitie, thinke alſo of what ſinnes may beſet us there, this will awaken up ſuch graces in us, as are ſutable to ſuch an eſtate for the preventing of ſuch ſinnes and temptations, and ſo keepe our hearts in *exerciſe to godlineſſe*: then which, nothing will more prevent ſleeping.

3. *Meanes*
To labour for a great meaſure of the Spirit of God.

And withall, *labour for abundance of the Spirit of God*, for what makes men ſleepie, and drowſie? the

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the want of ſpirits, weeare dull, and overloaden with groſſe humours, whereby the ſtrength ſinkes and failes? Chriſtians ſhould knovv, that there is a neceſſitie, if they vvill keepe themſelves waking, to keepe themſelves ſpirituall. Pray for the Spirit above all things, it is the life of our life, the ſoule of our ſoule. What is the bodie without the ſoule, or the ſoule vvithout the Spirit of God, even a dead lump. And let us keepe our ſelves in ſuch good vvaies, as vve may expect the preſence of the Spirit to bee about us, vvhich vvill keepe us awake.

4. *Meanes To keepe our ſelves in the light.*

Wee muſt keepe our ſelves in as much light as may be, for all ſleepineſſe comes vvith darkenes, let us keepe our ſoules in a perpetuall light, when any doubtful darke thought ariſeth, upon yeelding thereunto comes a ſleepie temper, ſleepineſſe in the affections ariſeth from darkeneſſe of judgement, the more we labour to increaſe our knowledge, and the more the ſpirituall light and beames of it ſhine in at our windovves, the better it vvill be for us, and the more ſhall we be able to keepe avvake. What makes men in their corruptions to avoid the Miniſtery of the Word, or any thing that may avvake their conſciences? It is the deſire they have to ſleepe, they knovv, the more they knovv, the more they muſt practiſe, or elſe they muſt have a galled conſcience. They ſee Religion vvill not ſtand vvith their ends, rich they muſt be, and great they vvill be, but if they ſuffer the light to grow upon them, that will tell them

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they must not rise, and be great, by these and such courses. A gracious heart will be desirous of spirituall knowledge especially, and not care how neere the Word comes: because they ingeniously and freely desire to be spiritually better, they make all things in the world yeeld to the inward man: they desire to know their owne corruptions and evills more and more, and therefore love the light *as children of the light, and of the day.* 1 *Thess.* 5. Sleepe is a worke of darkenesse, men therefore of darke and drowsie hearts desire darkenesse for that very end that their consciences may sleepe.

Labour to preserve the soule in the feare of God; because feare is a waking affection, yea one of the wakefullest; For, *Naturally we are more moved with dangers, then stirred with hopes*: Therfore, that affection, that is most conversant about danger, is the most rowzing and waking affection. Preserve therfore the feare of God by all meanes. It is one character of a Christian, who, when he hath lost almost all Grace (to his feeling) yet the feare of God is alwayes left with him; he feares sin, and the reward of it, and therfore God makes that awe the Bond of the New Covenant. *I will put my feare into their hearts, that they shall never depart from mee* One Christian is better then another, by how much more he wakes, and feares more then another. Of all Christians, marke those are most gracious, spirituall and heavenly, that are the most awfull, and carefull of their speeches, courses, and demeanours: tender, even of

5. *Meanes*

Ier. 32. 39.

Who are the best Christians

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of offending God in little things. You ſhall not have light, & common oathes come from them, nor unſavoury ſpeeches. Sometimes a good Chriſtian may in a ſtate of ſleepineſſe be faulty ſome way. But he grovves in the knovvledge of the greatneſſe of God, and the experience of his ovvn infirmities, as he grovves in the ſenſe of the love of God. He is affraid to looſe that ſvveet Communion any way, or to grieve the Spirit of God: Therefore, alwaies *as a man growes in grace, he growes in awfulneſſe, and in jealouſie of his owne corruptions*. Therefore let us preſerve by all meanes this awefull affection, the feare of God; Let us then often ſearch the ſtate of our own ſoules, our going backward or forward, how it is betweene God and our ſoules; how fit we are to die, and to ſuffer; how fit for the times that may befall us? Let us examine the ſtate of our own ſoules which will preſerve us in a waking eſtate, eſpecially examine our ſelves in regard of the ſinnes of the place, and the times where vve live, of the ſinnes of our ovvne inclination, how we ſtand affected and byaſed in all thoſe reſpects, and ſee hovv jealous we are of dangers in this kind. Thoſe that vvill keep vvaking ſoules, muſt conſider the danger of the place vvhere they live, and the times; vvhat ſins raigne, vvhat ſins ſuch a companie as they converſe vvith, are ſubject unto, and their own weakeneſſe to be led away with ſuch temptations. This jealouſie is a Branch of that feare, that vve ſpake of before, ariſing from the ſearching of our ovvn hearts, and diſpoſitions. It is a notable

notable meanes to keep us awake when we keepe our hearts in feare of ſuch ſins as either by calling, cuſtome, company, or the time we live in; or by our owne diſpoſition we are moſt prone to.

There is no Chriſtian, but he hath ſome ſpeciall ſinne to vvhich he is more prone then to an other, one vvay or other, either by courſe of life, or complection, here novv is the care and vvatchfulneſſe of a Chriſtian ſpirit, that knowing by examination, and tryall of his ovvne heart, his vveakeneſſe, he doth eſpecially fence againſt that, vvhich he is moſt inclined to; and is able to ſpeake moſt againſt that ſinne of all others, and to bring the ſtrongeſt arguments to diſhearten others from practiſe of it.

6. Meanes The Communion of Saints.

In the laſt place it is a thing of no ſmall conſequence, that vve keepe company vvith vvaking and faithfull Chriſtians, ſuch as neither ſleepe themſelves or do vvillingly ſuffer any to ſleepe that are neere them.

It is a report, and a true one of the ſweating ſickneſſe, that they that vvere kept avvake by thoſe that vvere vvith them eſcaped, but the ſickneſſe vvas deadly if they vvere ſuffered to ſleepe. It is one of the beſt fruits of the Communion of Saints and of our ſpirituall good acquaintance to keepe one another avvake. Its an unpleaſing vvorke on both ſides. But vve ſhall one day cry out againſt all them that have pleaſed themſelves and us, in rocking us aſleepe, and thanke thoſe that have pulled us *with feare* out of the fire, though againſt our vvills.

Let

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Let us labour upon our owne hearts in the Conſcionable uſe of allthese meanes, in their ſeverall times and ſeaſons, that we may keepe our hearts waking, and the more earneſt ought we to be from conſideration of the preſent age and ſeaſon in which we live.

Certainly a drowſie temper is the moſt ordinary temper in the World. For would men ſuffer idle words, yea filthy and rotten talke to come from their mouths if they were awake? Would a waking man runne into a pit? or upon a ſwords point? A man that is aſleepe may doe any thing. What doe men meane when they feare not to lye, diſſemble, and ruſh upon the pikes of Gods diſpleaſure? When they ſay one thing and doe another, are they not dead? or take them at the beſt, are they not aſleepe? Were they awake, would they ever doe thus? Will not a fowle that hath wings, avoyde the ſnare? or will a beaſt runne into a pit when it ſees it? There is a ſnare laid in your Play-houſes, gaming houſes, Common houſes that Gentlemen frequent that generally profeſſe Religion, and take the Communion. If the eye of their ſoules were awake, would they runne into theſe ſnares, that their owne Conſciences tells them are ſo? If there be any goodneſſe in their ſoules, it is wondrous ſleepie; There is no man (even the beſt) but may complaine ſomething, that they are overtaken in the contagion of theſe infectious times, they catch drowſie tempers (as our Saviour ſaith) of thoſe latter times.

For the abundance of iniquity, the love of many ſhall waxe cold. A chill temper, growes ever from the coldneſſe of the times that we live in, wherin the beſt may complaine of coldneſſe, but there is great difference. The life of many, we ſee, is a continuall ſleepe.

Let us eſpecially watch over our ſelves, in the uſe of liberty and ſuch things as are in themſelves lawfull. It is a bleſſed ſtate, when a Chriſtian carries himſelfe ſo in his liberty, that his heart condemnes him not for the abuſe of that which it alloweth and juſtly in a moderate uſe. Recreations are lawfull, who denies it? To refreſh a mans ſelfe, is not onely lawfull, but neceſſary. *God knew it well enough*: Therefore hath allotted time for ſleepe, and the like. *But we muſt not turne Recreation into a Calling*, to ſpend too much time in it.

Where there is leaſt feare, there is moſt danger alwaies. Now becauſe in lawfull things there is leaſt feare, *we are there in moſt danger*. It is true for the moſt part, *Licitis perimus omnes*, more men periſh in the *Church* of God by the abuſe of lawfull things, then by unlawfull, more by meate, then by poiſon; Becauſe every man takes heed of poiſon, beeing he knowes the venome of it, but how many men ſurfet, and dye by meate? ſo many men, die by lawfull things, they eternally periſh in the abuſe of their liberties, more then in groſſe ſinnes. Therefore let us keepe awake, that we may carry our ſelves ſo in our liberties, that we condemne not our ſelves

SER. IIII.

The Excellency of a waking Christian.

selves in the use of them. We will conclude this point with the Meditation of the *Excellency* of a waking Christian, when he is in his right temper, hee is an excellent person, fit for all assaies, he is then impregnable, Satan hath nothing to do with him, for he (as it is said) is then a *wise man* and *hath his eyes in his head*; he knowes himselfe, his state, his enemies, and adversaries, the snares of Prosperitie, and Adversitie, and of all conditions, *&c.* Therefore, he being *awake*, is not overcome of the evill of any condition, and is ready for the good of any estate. He that hath a waking soule, he sees all the advantages of good, and all the snares that might draw him to ill. What a blessed estate is this? In all things therefore watch: in all estates, in all times, and in all actions. There is a danger in every thing without watchfulnesse. There is a scorpion under every stone (as the Proverbe is) a snare under every blessing of God, and in every condition, which Satan useth as a weapon to hurt us. *Adversitie* to discourage us, *Prosperitie* to puffe us up. When, if a Christian hath not a waking soule, Sathan hath him in his snare; In *Prosperitie* to bee proud, and secure; In *Adversitie* to murmure, repine, bee dejected, and call Gods *providence* into question. When a Christian hath a heart, and grace to awake, then his *Love*, his *Patience*, his *Faith* is *awake*, as it should bee, hee is fit for all Conditions to doe good in them, and to take good by them.

Mark. 13.37.

Let

Let us therefore labour to preſerve watchfull and waking hearts continually, that ſo we may be fit to live, to die, and to appeare before the judgement ſeate of God; to doe what we ſhould doe, and ſuffer what we ſhould ſuffer, being ſquared for all eſtates whatſoever.

* * *

The end of the Fourth Sermon.

THE FIFT SERMON.

CANT. V. VER. II.

It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me my Sister, my Love, my Dove, my Undefiled; For my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the dropps of the Night.

HItherto by Gods assistance, we have heard largely both of the *Churches sleeping*, and *Heart-waking*, What this *sleeping*, and *Heart-waking* is; How it comes, the tryalls of these opposite dispositions; of the danger of sleeping, and excellency

of Heartwaking; and of the helpes, and meanes both to ſhunne the one, and preſerve the other. Now the *Church* having ſo freely and ingeniouſly confeſſed what ſhee could againſt her ſelfe, proceeds yet further to acquaint us with the particulars in her heart-waking diſpoſition, Which were two-fold, ſhee heard and diſcerned *the voice of her Beloved*, who for all her ſleepe, was her *Beloved* ſtill, and more then that, ſhe remembers all his ſweete words and allurements, whereby hee preſſed her to open unto him, *Saying, open to me my love, my dove, my undefiled*, which is ſet out, and amplified with a further mooving argument of thoſe inconveniences *Chriſt* had ſuffered in his waiting for entertainement in her heart. *For my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the dropps of the night.* All which aggravates her offence, and his rare goodneſſe, and patience towards miſerable ſinners, ſo to waite from time to time for admiſſion into our wretched ſoules, that he may rule, and governe them by his holy Spirit. Therefore we had great need to ſhunne this ſleepie diſtemper of ſoule, which for the preſent ſo lockes up *the everlaſting gates of our ſoule, that the King of glory cannot enter in*; and to ſtrive for this bleſſed heart-waking diſpoſition, which may helpe us at all times to ſee our dangers, and by Gods bleſſing recover us out of them, as heere the *Church* doth at length, though firſt ſmarting and well beaten by *the watch-men*, in a world of perplexities, ere ſhe

Pſal. 24.

can

can recover the ſence of her former union, and Communion with *Chriſt.*

And ſurely, we find by experience, what a woefull thing it is for the ſoule, which hath once taſted how gracious the Lord is, to be long without a ſence of Gods love, For when it lookes upon ſinne as the cauſe of this ſeperation; this is for the time, as ſo many deaths unto it. Therefore the *Churches* experience muſt be our warning-peece to take heed how we grieve the Spirit, and ſo fall into this ſpirituall ſleepe: Wherein yet this is a good ſigne, that yet we are not in a deſperate dead ſleepe, when we can with her ſay,

It is the voice of my Beloved that knocks, ſaying, open unto mee, &c.

In which words you have,

1. *The Churches acknowledgment of Chriſts voice.*
2. *Of his carriage towards her.*

1. *Her acknowledgment* is ſet downe heere, *It is the voice of my Beloved.*

2. His caraiage, *Hee knockes,* &c. wherein

1. *His Patience in ſuffering things unworthy and utterly unbeſeeming for him.* He doth not onely *knocke, but he continues knocking, till his head was filled with dew, and his locks with the dropps of the night..*

2. *His friendly Commpellation, open to me my love, my dove, my undefiled.* Loe here are ſweet actions, ſweete words, and all to melt the heart of the Spouſe.

First, *the Churches acknowledgement* is to be considered, Confessing, *It is the voce of her Beloved.* The first thing to be observed in this acknowledgement is, That the *Church* however sleepie and drowsie she was, yet notwithstanding her heart was so farre awake, as to know the voice of her husband. The point is this,

Obser. *That a Christian soule doth know and may discerne the voice of Christ, yea and that even in a lazie, sleepie estate.*

But much more when in a good and lively frame.

Iohn. 10. *Gods Beleevers are Christs sheepe,* Now *my sheepe* (saith Christ) *heare my voice.* It is the eare marke (as it were) of a Christian, one of the characters of the new man, *To taste words by the eare,* (as *Iob* saith) he hath a spirituall taste, a discerning relish in his eare, because hee hath the Spirit of God, and therefore relisheth what is connaturall, and sutable to the Spirit. Now the *voice* of Christ without in the ministery, and the *Spirit* of *Christ* within in the heart are connaturall and sutable each to other.

Iob. 12. 11.

Difference of Christians by a spirituall taste in hearing.

And surely so it is, *That this is one way to discerne a true Christian from an other, even by a taste in hearing.* For those that have a spirituall relish, they can heare with some delight things that are most spirituall. As the *Heathen* man said of a meadow, that some creatures come to eate one sort of herbs: others an other, all that which is fit for them; Men, to walke therein for delight; All for ends sutable to their nature. So in comming to heare the Word

of

of God; ſome come to obſerve the elegancy of words and phraſes, ſome to catch advantage (perhaps) againſt the ſpeaker, men of a diveliſh temper, and ſome to conforme themſelves to the cuſtome of the places they live in, or to ſatisfie the clamours of a troubled conſcience, that will have ſome divine dutie performed, elſe it goes on with much vexation. But every true Chriſtian comes, and reliſheth what is ſpirituall; And when outward things can convey in ſimilituds ſpirituall things aptly to the mind, he reliſheth this not as elegant and pleaſing his fancy ſo much, as for conveying the voyce of *Chriſt* unto his ſoule. So that a man may much be helpt to know his ſtate in *Grace*, and what hee is by his eare: *Itching eares* uſually are ſuch as are *led with luſt*, as the Apoſtle ſaith, and they muſt be clawed. They are ſicke and nothing will downe with them, they quarrell with every thing that is wholeſome (as they did with *Manna*) no ſermons vvill pleaſe them, no bread is fine and vvhite enough. Whereas indeed, it is their ovvne diſtemper is in fault. As thoſe that goe in a ſhip upon the Sea; it is not the toſſing, but the ſtomacke, that cauſeth a ſickneſſe, the choler vvithin, and not the vvaves vvithout. So the diſquiet of theſe men that nothing vvill dovvne vvith them, is from their ovvne diſtemper. If *Chriſt* himſelfe vvere here a preaching, they vvould be ſure to cavill at ſomething, as then men did, vvhen he preached in his ovvne perſon; Becauſe they labour of

lusts, vvhich they resolve to feed and cherish.

And againe, Observe it against our Adversaries: What say they? Hovv shall vve knovv that the Word is the Word of God? For this heretique saith thus, and this interprets it thus. This is the common Objection of the great Rabbies amongst them in their vvritings, hovv vve can knovv the Word to be Gods, considering there are such heresies in the Churches, and such contrariety of opinions concerning the Scriptures read in the Churches.

Even thus to object and aske, is an argument, and testimonie, that these men have not the Spirit of *Christ*, for *His sheepe know his voice*; vvho hovvsoever they cannot interpret all places of Scripture, yet they can discerne in the Scripture vvhat is sutable food for them, or in the unfolding of the Scriptures, in preaching, they can discerne agreeable food for them, having a facultie to reject that vvhich is not fit for nourishment, to let it goe. As there is in nature passages fit for concoction, and digestion, and for rejection; so there is in the soule to vvorke out of the Word, even out of that vvhich *is hard*, yet vvholesome, vvhat is fit for the soule, and Spirit. If it be cast dovvne, it feeds upon the promises for direction, and consolation, and vvhat is not fit nourishment, that it rejects, that is, if it be of a contrary nature, *heterogeniall*. Therefore vve answer them thus: That *Gods sheepe heare his voice*, That his Word left in the *Church* (vvhen it is unfolded) his

Iohn. 10.

Iohn. 2. 20.

Spirit

Spirit goes together with it, breeding a reliſh of the Word in the hearts of people, whereby they are able to taſte and reliſh it, and it hath a ſupernaturall power and Majeſty in it, which carries its owne evidence with it. *How ſhall we know light to be light?* It carries evidence in it ſelfe, that it is light. *How know we that the fire is hot?* becauſe it carries evidence in it ſelfe, that it is ſo. So if you aske, *How we know the Word of God to be the Word of God? it carries in it ſelfe inbred Arguments, and Characters, that the ſoule can ſay none but this Word can be the Word of God, it hath ſuch a majeſty and power to caſt down, and raiſe up, and to comfort, and to direct with ſuch power, and majeſtie, that it carries with it its owne evidence, and it is argument enough for it.* And thus we anſwer them; which they can anſwer no way, but by cavills. *Gods ſheepe heare the voice of Chriſt*, He ſpeakes, and the *Church* underſtands him, *and a ſtrangers voice they will not heare. Ioh.* 10.5. SERM. V.

1 Cor. 14. 25.
2 Cor. 10. 4, 5.

And indeed, this is the onely ſure way of underſtanding the word to be of God from an inbred Principle of the majeſty in the word, and a powerfull worke thereof on the ſoule it ſelfe, and an aſſent ſo grounded is that which makes a ſound Chriſtian. If we ſhould aske what is the reaſon there be ſo many, *that Apoſtatize, fall away, grow prophane, and are ſo unfruitfull under the Goſpell?* notwithſtanding they heare ſo much as they doe; the anſwer is, their ſoules were never founded, and bottomed upon this,

Why ſo many apoſtatize.

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this, that it is the Word of God, and Divine truth, ſo as to be able to ſay, I have felt it by experience, that it is the voice of *Chriſt*. Therfore they ſo ſoone Apoſtatize, let Jeſuites, or ſeducers ſet upon them, They were never perſwaded from inbred Arguments, that the voice of *Chriſt* is the word of God: others from ſtrictneſſe grow prophane, becauſe they were never convinced by the power and majeſty of the truth in it ſelfe; and then in the end they deſpaire notwithſtanding all the promiſes, becauſe they were never convinced of the truth of them, they cannot ſay Amen to all the promiſes. But the *Church* can ſay confidently upon ſound experience, *It is the voice of my Beloved*, &c.

Againe, Whereas the *Church* ſaith here, *It is the voice of my Beloved*, &c. and knowes this voice of her Beloved, we may note,

Obſer. *That the Church of God, and every Chriſtian takes notice of the meanes that God uſeth for their ſalvation.*

A Chriſtian is ſenſible of all the bleſſed helpes he hath to ſalvation. To a dead heart, it is all one, whether they have meanes, or no meanes, but a Chriſtian ſoule takes notice of all the meanes. *It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh*, it ſeeth *Chriſt* in all.

A diſtinction betwixt ſleepe in divers Chriſtians, even at the worſt, and deadneſſe in a naturall man.

And marke what the *Church* ſaith moreover *It is the voice of my Beloved*, ſhee acknowledgeth *Chriſt to be beloved of her*; though ſhee were aſleepe. So then here is a diſtinction, betweene the ſleepe of a Chriſtian, and the dead ſleepe of another

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another naturall man, The one when he ſleepes, *His heart doth not onely wake, but it is awake to diſcerne the voice of Chriſt*, it can reliſh in reading what is ſpirituall and good, what is ſavourie, and what not. And likewiſe take a Chriſtian at the worſt, when hee is aſleepe, he loves Chriſt, he will do nothing againſt him. *I can doe nothing* (ſaith *Paul*) *againſt the truth, but for the truth*; hee will doe nothing againſt the cauſe of Religion, there is a new Nature in him, that hee cannot doe otherwiſe, he cannot but love, hee cannot ſinne with a full purpoſe, nor ſpeake againſt a good cauſe, becauſe hee hath a new nature, that leads him another way, *Chriſt* is her *Belovcds* ſtill though ſhe *ſleepe*. 1 Co.13.8.

Take a Chriſtian at the loweſt, his heart yearnes after Chriſt. *Obſer.*

Acknowledging him to be his *Beloved*, There is a conjugall chaſtitie in the ſoule of a Chriſtian, holding firme to the covenant and marriage betweene *Chriſt* and it, hee keepes that unviolable, though he may be untoward, ſleepie, and drowſie, yet there is alwaies a conjugall ſpouſe-like affection. *It is the voice of my Beloved*, &c.

Now leaving the *Churches* notice of the voice of *Chriſt*, We come *to Chriſts carriage towards her.*

1. *Hee knocketh*, and then wee have,
2. *His Patience in that Carriage.*

My head is filled with dew, and my lockes with the dropps of the night, &c. Here is *Patience*, and *Mercie* to indure this indignitie at the *Churches* hand,

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hand, to ſtand at her courteſie to come in, beſides 3. the *Compellation*, afterwards to be ſpoken of, The generall obſervation from *Chriſts carriage*, is this,

Obſer. *That Chriſt ſtill deſires a further and further communion with his Church.*

Even as the true ſoule, that is touched with the Spirit deſires neerer and neerer communion with *Chriſt*. So hee ſeekes neerer and neerer communion with his Spouſe, by all ſanctified meanes; *Chriſt* hath never enough of the ſoule; he would have them more and more open to him, our hearts are for *Chriſt*, who hath the heaven of heavens, and the ſoule of a believing Chriſtian for himſelfe to dwell in, he contents not himſelfe to be in heaven alone, but he will have our hearts. Hee knocks heere, waites, ſpeakes friendly and lovingly with ſuch ſweete wordes, *My Love, my Dove*, &c. We had a bleſſed Communion in the ſtate of innocencie, and ſhall have a glorious communion in heaven, when the marriage ſhall be conſummated; but now the time of this life is but as the time of the contract, during which there are yet many mutuall paſſages of love betweene him and his Spouſe, a deſire of mutuall communion of either ſide. *Chriſt* deſires further entertainement in his *Churches* heart and affection, that hee might lodge, and dwell there: And likewiſe there is the like deſire in the *Church*, (when ſhee is in a right temper,) So that if any ſtrangeneſſe bee betweene *Chriſt*, and any mans ſoule, that hath taſted

tasted how good the Lord is, let him not blame *Christ* for it, for he delights not in strangenesse; Hee that *knockes* and *stands knocking, while his locks are bedewed with the dropps of the night?* Doth he delight in strangenesse, that makes all this Love to a Christians soule? Certainely No.

That the cause of Christs strangenesse to the Church is in our selves.

Therefore looke for the cause of his strangenesse at any time in thine owne selfe; As, *Whether we cast our selves imprudently into company, that are not fit to be consulted withall,* in whom the Spirit is not, and who cannot doe us any good, or they cast themselves to us. Evill company is a great dampning, whereby a Christian looseth his comfort much, especially that intimate communion with God, whence wee may fall into security.

Againe, *Discontinuing of Religious exercises doth wonderfully cause Christ to withdraw himselfe;* He makes no more love to our soules, when we neglect the meanes, and discontinue holy exercises, and religious companie, when we stirre not up the graces of Gods Spirit; being this way negligent, it is no wonder that *Christ* makes no more love to our soules, when we prize and value not the communion that should be betweene the soule, and *Christ*, as we should. *Whom have I in heaven, but thee? Thy loving kindnesse is better then life.* (saith the Psalmist) when we prize not this, it is just with *Christ* to make himselfe strange. *Where love is not valued, and esteemed, it is estranged, and for a while hides it selfe.* So that these with other courses, and failings,

Psal. 73. 25.

Psal. 63. 3.

SERM. V.

failings, we may finde to be the ground, and reaſon of the ſtrangeneſſe betweene *Chriſt* and the ſoule, for certainely the cauſe is not in him: for vve ſee here, he uſeth all meanes to be entertained by a Chriſtian ſoule, *he knockes.*

Lament 3.

You knovv vvhat he ſaies to the *Church* of *Laodicea*, Rev.3.20. *Behold I ſtand at the doore, and knocke*, So here, *It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh*, therefore in ſuch a caſe, ſearch your ovvn hearts, vvhere if there be deadneſſe, and diſertion of Spirit; lay the blame upon your ſelves, and enter into a ſearch of your ovvn vvayes, and ſee vvhat may be the cauſe.

That Chriſt takes not the advantage and forfeiture of the ſins of his Church.

Novv to come more particularly to *Chriſts* carriage here knocking at the heart of the ſleepie *Church*; We ſee, that *Chriſt takes not the advantage, and forfeiture of the ſinnes of his Church, to leave them altogether, but makes further and further love to them*, though the Church be ſleepie, *Chriſt* continues knocking. The *Church* of *Laodicea* vvas a ſuke-vvarme, proud, hypocriticall *Church*, yet *Behold*, (ſaith *Chriſt*) *I ſtand at the doore and knocke*, and it vvas ſuch a *Church* as vvas vaineglorious, and conceited. *I am rich and want nothing, when ſhee was poore, blind, and naked.* And here he doth not onely ſtand knocking, but he vvithall ſuffereth indignities, *the dew* to fall upon him, *which we ſhall ſpeake more of hereafter.* Chriſt therefore refuſeth not vveake ſinners, he that commands, *that we ſhould receive him that is weake in the faith*, and not caſt him off from our fellowſhip, and companie, vvill he

Rev. 3.20.

reject

reject him that is weake, and sleepie? No, what Father will passe by, or neglect his Child for some failings, and weakenesses, Nature will move him to respect him as his Child.

Now Christ is mercifull both by his office, and by his nature; our nature he tooke upon him, that he might be a mercifull redeemer, And then as God also he is love, *God is love*, that is, whatsoever God shewes himselfe to his Church, he doth it in *love*, If hee be angry in correcting, it is out of *love*, if *Mercifull*, it is out of *love*, if he be *Powerfull* in defending his Church, and revenging himselfe on her Enemies, all is *love*, *God is love* (saith *Iohn*) that is, hee shewes himselfe onely in wayes, expressions and characters of love to his Church; So Christ, as God, is all love to the Church. And we see the Scriptures also to set out God as love, both in his essence, and in his relations, 1. in Relations of love to his Church; Hee is a Father, *As a Father pittieth his childe, so the Lord pitties them that feare him*, and 2. also in those sweete Attributes of *love*, which are his essence, as we see, *Exod.* 34. 6. When God describes himselfe to *Moses* after his desire to know him, in the former Chapter, *Thou canst not see me and live*; yet he would make him know him, as was fit for him to bee knowne, *Iehovah, Iehovah, Strong, Mercifull, Gratious, Longsuffering*, &c. Thus God will be knowne in these Attributes of Consolation. So Christ as God, is all love, and mercie, Likewise Christ

Heb. 2. 17.
1 Joh 4 16.
1 Ioh. 4. 8.
Psal. 103.
Exod. 34. 6.

as

as man, hee was man for this end to be all love, and mercy, Take him in his office as *Iesus* to be a Saviour, he carrieth salvation in his wings, as it is *Mal.* 4. 2. both by Office, and by Nature.

And here how excellently is the expression of Christs mercie, love, and patience set out? *He knockes, my Beloved knocketh,* &c. saying, Hee knockes for further entrance (as was shewed before) some he had already, but he would have further, As you know we have divers roomes, and places in our houses; There is the court, the hall, the parlour, and closset. The hall for common persons, the parlour for those of better fashion, the closset for a mans selfe, and those that are intimate friends; So a Christian hath roome in his heart for worldly thoughts, but his closset, his inmost affections, are kept for his inmost friend Christ, who is not content with the hall, but will come into the very closset, he knocks that we should open, and let him come into our hearts, into our more intimate affections, and love; nothing will content him, but intimateness, for he deserves it, as we shall see, hee knockes for this end. But *how doth he knocke?*

How Christ is said to knocke at our hearts.

I.

By a voice.

Every kind of way; It is taken from the fashion of men, in this kind (God condescending to speake to us in our own language) Sometimes you know *There is a knocking or calling for entrance by voice,* when a voice may serve, and then there needs no further knocking.

Sometimes both by voice and knocking.

Sometimes *both by voice, and knocking,* If

voice

voice will not ſerve, knocking comes after. So it is here, Chriſt doth knocke, and ſpeake, uſeth a voice of his Word, and knocks by his workes, and both together ſometimes, whether by workes of mercy or of judgement, he labours to enter into the ſoule, to raiſe the ſleepie ſoule that way; he beginns with mercy uſually. 1. By mercies, All the creatures, and bleſſings of God carrie in them (as it were) a voice of God to the ſoule, that it would entertaine his love, There goes a voice of love with every bleſſing. And the love, the mercie, and the goodneſſe of God in the creature, is better then the creature it ſelfe. As we ſay of gifts, *The love of the giver is better then the gift it ſelfe.* So the love of God in all his ſweete benefits, is better then the thing it ſelfe, and ſo in that we have, There is a voice (as it were) entreating us to entertaine God, and Chriſt in all his mercies, yea every creature (as one ſaith) and benefit ſpeakes as it were thus to us; *Wee ſerve thee, that thou maieſt ſerve him, that made thee and us.* There is a ſpeech (as it were) in every favour, which mercies, if they cannot prevaile, then come *corrections*, which are the voice of God alſo, *Heare the rodd, and him that ſmiteth*; but hath the rodd a voice?

Mica. 6. 9.

2. *By the rodd which hath a voice in corrections,*

Yes, for what doe corrections ſpeake, but amendment of the fault we are corrected for? ſo we muſt heare the rodd, all corrections tend to this purpoſe, they are as knockings, that we ſhould open to God and Chriſt. And becauſe corrections of themſelves will not amend

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amend us. God to this kind of knocking adds a voice, he teacheth, and corrects together, *Happie is that man that thou correcteſt, and teacheſt out of thy Law*, (ſaith the Pſalmiſt) Correction without teaching is to little purpoſe, Therefore God adds inſtruction to correction. He opens the conſcience, ſo that it tells us it is for this that you are corrected, and together with conſcience, gives his Spirit to tell us, it is for this, or that you are corrected: you are too blame in this; this you have done, that you ſhould not have done; So that *Corrections are knockings*, but then eſpecially when they have inſtruction thus with them. They are meſſengers from God, both Bleſſings and Corrections, *they will not away* (eſpecially corrections) till they have an anſwer, for they are ſent of God, who will add ſeven times more; and if the firſt be not anſwered, then he ſends after them, hee will be ſure to have an anſwer, either in our Converſion, or Confuſion, when hee beginns once.

Pſal. 94. 10.

Lev. 26. 24.

3. *God knocketh by the good examples of others.* Luk. 13. 2, 3. 1 Cor. 10.

Many other wayes he uſeth to knocke at our hearts. *The examples of thoſe we live among that are good, they call upon us*, The patternes of their holy life. The examples of Gods juſtice upon others, are ſpeeches to us, God knocks at our doore then, He intends our correction, when he viſits another, when if we amend by that, he needes not take us in hand.

4. *By his Miniſteriall knocking.*

But beſides all this, there is a more neere knocking, that Chriſt uſeth to the Church,

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His miniſteriall knocking, when he was here in the daies of his fleſh, hee was a Preacher and Prophet himſelfe, and now he is aſcended into heaven, he hath given gifts to men, and men to the Church, whom he ſpeakes by to the end of the world, they are Chriſts mouth, as wee ſaid of the pen-men of holy Scripture; they were but the hand to write, Chriſt was the head to indite. So in preaching and unfolding the Word, they are but Chriſts mouth and his voyce, (as it is ſaid of *Iohn,*) Now he is in heaven, he ſpeakes by them; *Hee that heareth you, heareth me, he that deſpiſeth you deſpiſeth mee.* Chriſt is either received or rejected in his Miniſters, as it is ſaid of *Noahs* time, *The Spirit of Chriſt preached in the daies of* Noah *to the ſoules now in priſon,* &c. Chriſt as God did preach before he was incarnate by *Noah* to the old world, which is now in priſon, in hell, becauſe they refuſed to heare Chriſt ſpeake to them by *Noah:* Much more now after the daies of his fleſh, that he is in heaven, he ſpeakes, and preacheth to us, which if we regard not, we are like to be in priſon, as thoſe ſoules are now in priſon for neglecting the preaching of *Noah,* 1 *Pet.*3.19. So the Miniſters are Chriſts mouth, when they ſpeake he ſpeakes by them, and they are as Embaſſadours of Chriſt, (whom they ſhould imitate in mildneſſe) *We therefore as Embaſſadours beſeech and entreat you, as if Chriſt by us ſhould ſpeake to you; ſo we entreat you to be reconciled unto God.* And you know

Ephes. 4.

Luk. 10. 17.

2 Cor. 5. 20.

what heart-breaking wordes the Apoſtle uſeth in all his Epiſtles (eſpecially when he writes to Chriſtians in a good ſtate) as to the *Philippians*, *If there be any bowells of mercy, if there be any conſolation in Christ*, then regard what I ſay, *be of one mind*. And among the *Theſſalonians*, He was as a Nurſe to them, So Chriſt ſpeakes by them, and puts his owne affections into them, that as he is tender, and full of bowells himſelfe, ſo he hath put the ſame bowells into thoſe that are his true Miniſters.

Phil. 1. 2.

1 Theſ. 2. 19.

Hee ſpeakes by them, and they uſe all kind of meanes that Chriſt may be entertained into their hearts. They moove all ſtones (as it were) ſometimes *threatnings*; ſometimes *intreaties*, ſometimes they come as *ſonnes of thunder*, ſometimes *with the ſtill voice of ſweete promiſes*; And becauſe one man is not ſo fit as another for all varieties of conditions and Spirits, therefore God gives variety of gifts to his Miniſters, that they may knocke at the heart of every man by their ſeverall gifts. For ſome have more rouzing, ſome more inſinuating gifts, ſome more *legall*, ſome more *evangelicall* ſpirits, yet all for the Churches good. *Iohn Baptiſt* by a more thundering way of preaching, to make way for Chriſt to come, threatneth judgement. But Chriſt then he comes with a *Bleſſed are the poore in Spirit, Bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt for Righteouſneſſe*, &c. All kind of meanes have beene uſed in the miniſtrie from the beginning of the world.

Mat. 5. 3.

And

5. *By the Spirit.*

And becauſe of it ſelfe this miniſtry it is a dead letter, Therefore hee joynes that with the Word, which knockes at the heart together with the Word, not ſevered from it, but is the life of it, *Oh the Spirit is the life, and ſoule of the Word*, and when the inward vvord, or voyce of the Spirit, and the outward vvord or Miniſtry goe together, then Chriſt doth more effectually knocke, and ſtirre up the heart.

Now this Spirit with ſweete inſpirations knockes, mooves the heart, lightens the underſtanding, quickens the dull affections, and ſtirrs them up to dutie, as it is, *Iſay.* 30.21. *And thine eares ſhall heare a voice behind thee ſaying, This is the way, walke in it.* The Spirit mooves us ſweetly agreeable to our owne nature, it offers not violence to us; But ſo as in *Hoſea.* 11.4. *I drew them by the cordes of a man.* That is, by reaſons and motives befitting the nature of man, motives of love. So the Spirit together with the vvord, workes upon us, as we are men by rationall motives, ſetting *good* before us, If we will let Chriſt in to governe, and rule us; and by the danger on the contrary, ſo mooving, and ſtirring up our affections, Theſe be *the cords of a man.*

6. *The Conſcience alſo knockes.*

And beſides his Spirit, God hath planted in us a *Conſcience* to call upon us, to be his Vicar, a little god in us to doe his office, to call upon us, direct us, checke, and condemne us, which in great mercy he hath placed in us.

Thus we ſee what meanes Chriſt uſeth here;

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His voice, Works, and *Word,* works of *Mercie* and of *Correction,* his *Word* together with his *Spirit,* and the *Conscience,* that he hath planted to be (as it were) a God in us, which together with his Spirit may moove us to dutie. This *Austine* speakes of when he saith, *Deus in me,* &c. *God spake in mee oft, and I knew it not*; He meanes it of Conscience together with the Spirit, stirring up motives to leave his sinfull courses. God knocked in mee, and I considered it not. I cried, *modò* and *modò, sine modo.* I put of God, now I will, and now I will, but I had no moderation, I knew no limits. And whilst Christ thus knocketh, all the three Persons may be said to doe it. For as it is said elsewhere, *that God was and is in Christ reconciling the world,* &c. For whatsoever Christ did, he did it as annoynted, and by office, And therefore God doth it in Christ, and by Christ, and so in some sort God died in his humane nature, when Christ died. So here the Father beseecheth, when Christ beseecheth, because hee beseecheth that is sent from him, and annoynted of the Father. And God the Father stoopes to us, when Christ stoopes, because he is sent of the Father, and doth all by his Fathers commaund, and commission. So besides his owne bowells, there is the Father and the Spirit with Christ, who doth all by his Spirit, and from his Father, from whom he hath commission. Therefore God the Father, Sonne, and Holy Ghost knock at the heart. *Open to me, my love, my dove, my undefiled,*

In his Confessions.

2 Cor. 5. 19.

Acts. 10. 26.

Iohn. 5.

undefiled, but Christ especially by his Spirit, because it is his office.

But some may object, *Christ can open to himselfe, why doth he not take the key and open, and make way for himselfe? Who will knocke, when he hath the key himselfe? and who will knocke, when there is none within to open? Christ can open to himselfe, and wee have no free will, nor power to open?* *Object.*

Bellarmine makes this *Objection*, and speakes very rudely, that he is an unwise man to knocke, where there is no man within to open; and that if Christ knocke, and we cannot open, it is a delusion to exhort to open, and that therefore there must needs be free-will in us to open?

The Answer is; First, Christ speakes to the Spouse here, and so many such exhortations are given to them that have the Spirit of God already, who could by the helpe thereof open. For good, and gracious men, are mooved first by the Spirit, and then they moove; they are *Moti moventes*, and *Acti Agentes*. They are acted first by the Spirit, and then they doe act by it, not of themselves: as the inferiour Orbes moove not, but as they are mooved by the superiour. The Question is not of them in the state of Grace, but at their first Conversion, when especially we say that Christ speakes to them that hee meanes to convert, *He knocks at their hearts, and opens together with his speech*, Then there goes a power that they shall open, for

Answ.
Why Christ knockes though he hath power to open to himselfe: and bids us open, who want power to doe it.

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for his wordes are operative wordes; as it was in the Creation, *Let there be light*, it was an operative word, *and there was light*. Let there bee such a Creature, it was an operative working word, and there was such a Creature presently; So hee opens together with that word. With that invitation, and commaund there goes an almighty power to inable the soule to open; Were it not a wise reason to say, When Christ called to *Lazarus to come forth*, that wee should reason hee had life to yeeld to Christ, when he bad him come forth? no, he was rotten in his grave almost; but with Christs speaking to *Lazarus*, there went an almightie power, that gave life to him, by which life he heard what Christ said, *Arise Lazarus*. So Christ by his Spirit cloaths his word in the Ministery, when he speakes to people with a mightie power: as the Minister speakes to the eare, Christ speaks, opens, and unlocks the heart at the same time, and gives it power to open, not from it selfe, but from Christ. *Paul* speakes to *Lydias* eare, Christ to her heart, and opened it, as the Text sayes, whereby shee believes, so Christ opens the heart;

Gen. 1. 3.

Ioh. 11. 43.

Acts. 16. 13.

Quest. But *Why doth he thus worke?*

Answ. Because hee will preserve *Nature*, and the principles thereof, and so he deales with us, working accordingly; the manner of working of the reasonable creature, is to worke freely by a sweet inclination, not by violence. Therefore when he workes the worke of Conversion,

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hee doth it in a ſweet manner, though it bee mightie for the Efficaciouſnes of it, he admoniſheth us with intreatie, and perſwaſion, as if we did it our ſelves. But though the manner be thus ſweet, yet with this manner there goeth an almighty power. Therefore hee doth it ſtrongly as comming from himſelfe, and ſweetly, as the ſpeaking is to us preſerving our Nature, ſo the Action is from him, which hath an almightie power with it. As Holy *Bernard* ſaith, *Thou dealeſt ſweetly with my ſoule in regard of my ſelfe,* (That is, thou workeſt upon me, as a man with the wordes of love,) *yet ſtrongly in regard of thy ſelfe.* For except he adde ſtrength with ſweetneſſe, the worke will not follow; but when there are both, an almightie worke is wrought in the ſoule of a Chriſtian; and ſo wrought, as the manner of mans working is preſerved in a ſweet and free manner, whilſt he is changed from contrarie to contrarie; And it is alſo with the greateſt reaſon that can be, In that now he ſees more reaſon to be good, then in the daies of darkeneſſe he did to be naught, God workes ſo ſweetly. God ſpeakes to us after the manner of men, but he workes in us as the great God; he ſpeakes to us as a man in our owne language, ſweetly; but hee workes in us almightily, after a powerfull manner, as God; ſo we muſt underſtand ſuch phraſes as theſe, *I knocke, open to mee, my Love, my Dove,* &c. wee may take further notice,

Bernard.

That the heart of a Chriſtian, is the Houſe, and

Obſerv.

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and Temple of Christ.

Hee hath but two houſes to dwell in; the *Heavens*, and *the heart of an humble broken hearted ſinner*;

Isa. 57. 13.

Queſt. *How can Chriſt come into the ſoule?*

Anſw. Hee comes into the heart by his Spirit, It is a ſpeciall entertainement that hee lookes for: open thine eares that thou mayeſt heare my word: thy love, that thou mayeſt love mee more: thy joy, that thou mayeſt delight in mee more: open thy whole ſoule that I may dwell in it. A Chriſtian ſhould bee Gods houſe, and a true Chriſtian is the true Temple of God. Hee left the other two Temples therefore, but his owne body, and his Church he never leaves: for a houſe is for a man to ſolace himſelfe in, and to reſt in, and to lay up whatſoever is pretious to him. So with Chriſt, a man will repaire his howſe, ſo Chriſt will repaire our ſoules, and make them better, and make them more holy, and ſpirituall, and every way fit for ſuch a gueſt as he is.

How ſhall we know whether Chriſt dwells in our hearts or not.

Wee may know by the ſervants what Maſter dwells in an houſe, If Chriſt be in the ſoule there comes out of the houſe good ſpeeches, and we watch the ſenſes, ſo as there comes nothing into defile the ſoule, and diſturbe Chriſt, and nothing goes out to offend God. When we heare men full of gratious ſweet ſpeeches, It is a ſigne Chriſt dwells there. If we heare

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the contrary, It ſhewes Chriſt dwells not there, for Chriſt would move the whole man to doe that which might edifie and comfort.

Againe, where Chriſt comes, *Aſſiſtance comes there.* When Chriſt was borne, all *Ieruſalem* was in an uproare, ſo when Chriſt is borne in the ſoule, there is an uproare, corruption armes it ſelfe againſt Grace, there is a combate betwixt fleſh and Spirit, but Chriſt ſubdues the fleſh by little and little. Gods image is ſtamped upon the ſoule where Chriſt is, and if we have opened unto the Lord of Glory, hee will make us glorious.

Chriſt hath never enough of us, nor we have never enough of him, till we be in heaven, and therefore we pray, Thy Kingdome come, and till Chriſt comes in his Kingdome, hee deſires his Kingdome ſhould come to us, *Open* (ſaith he) *Stupenda dignatio*, &c. (as he cries out) it is a ſtupendious condeſcending, vvhen hee that hath Heaven to hould him, Angells to attend him, thoſe glorious creatures; hee that hath the commaund of every Creature, that doe yeeld preſently homage vvhen he commaunds, the Froggs, and Lice, and all the Hoſt of Heaven are ready to doe his vvill! for him to condeſcend, and to intreate us to be good to our ovvne ſoules, and to beſeech us to be reconciled to him, as if he had offended us, vvho have done the vvrong and not he, or as if that vve had povver, and riches to doe him good; Heere *Greatneſſe* beſeecheth *Meaneſſe*, *Riches Povertie*, *Alſuffici-*

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Wee may know by the ſervants what Maſter dwells in an houſe, If Chriſt be in the ſoule there comes out of the houſe good ſpeeches, and we watch the ſenſes, ſo as there comes nothing into defile the ſoule, and diſturbe Chriſt, and nothing goes out to offend God. When we heare men full of gratious ſweet ſpeeches, It is a ſigne Chriſt dwells there. If we heare

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the contrary, It shewes Christ dwells not there, for Christ would move the whole man to doe that which might edifie and comfort.

Againe, where Christ comes, *Assistance comes there.* When Christ was borne, all *Ierusalem* was in an uproare, so when Christ is borne in the soule, there is an uproare, corruption armes it selfe against Grace, there is a combate betwixt flesh and Spirit, but Christ subdues the flesh by little and little. Gods image is stamped upon the soule where Christ is, and if we have opened unto the Lord of Glory, hee will make us glorious.

Christ hath never enough of us, nor we have never enough of him, till we be in heaven, and therefore we pray, Thy Kingdome come, and till Christ comes in his Kingdome, hee desires his Kingdome should come to us, *Open* (saith he) *Stupenda dignatio*, &c. (as he cries out) it is a stupendious condescending, vvhen hee that hath Heaven to hould him, Angells to attend him, those glorious creatures; hee that hath the commaund of every Creature, that doe yeeld presently homage vvhen he commaunds, the Froggs, and Lice, and all the Host of Heaven are ready to doe his vvill! for him to condescend, and to intreate us to be good to our ovvne soules, and to beseech us to be reconciled to him, as if he had offended us, vvho have done the vvrong and not he, or as if that vve had povver, and riches to doe him good; Heere *Greatnesse* beseecheth *Meanesse*, *Riches Povertie*, *Alsuffici-*

All sufficiencie Want, and *life* it selfe, comes to *dead drowsie soules*. What a vvondrous condiscending is this? Yet notvvithstanding, Christ vouchsafes to make the heart of a sinfull, sleepie man to be his *House*, his *Temple*. Hee *knocks*, and *knocks* heere, saying, *Open to mee*, &c.

Vse. This is usefull many vvayes, as first, cherish all the good conceites vve can of Christ; Time vvill come, that the Divell vvill set upon us vvith sharpe temptations, fierie darts, temptations to despaire, and present Christ amisse, as if Christ vvere not vvilling to receive us, vvhen as you see he knockes at our hearts to open to him, useth *Mercies*, and *Iudgements*, *the Ministrie of his Spirit*, and *Conscience*, and all; Will not he then entertaine us, vvhen vvee come to him, that seekes this entertainement at our hands? Certainely hee vvill; Therefore let us labour to cherish good conceits of Christ. This is the finisher and beginning of the conversion of a poore sinfull soule, even to consider the infinite love, and condescending of Christ Jesus for the good of our soules? Wee need not vvonder at this his vvillingnesse to receive us, vvhen vvee first knovv, that God became man, happinesse became miserie, and *life it selfe*, *came to die*, *and to be a curse for us*. Hee hath done the greater and vvill he not doe the lesse? Therefore thinke not strange, that hee useth all these meanes, considering hovv lovv hee descended into the vvombe of the Virgin for us. *Ephes.* 4. 9.

Gal. 3 13.

Novv

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Novv ſuch conſiderations as theſe being mixed vvith the Spirit and ſet on by him, are effectuall for the converſion of poore ſoules. Is there ſuch love in God, to become man, and to be a Sutor to vvoe me for my love? Surely thinks the ſoule then, he deſires my Salvation, and Converſion; And to vvhat kind of perſons doth he come? None can Object unvvorthineſſe, I am poore; *hee comes to the poore.* I am laden, and vvretched? *Come unto mee all yee that are weary, and laden.* I have nothing; *Come and buy honey, milke, and wine, though you have nothing.* He takes avvay all Objections. But I am ſtung vvith the ſence of my ſinnes? *Bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt,* &c. But I am emptie of all? *Bleſſed are the poore in Spirit.* You can object nothing, but it is taken avvay by the Holy Ghoſt, vviſely preventing all the Objections of a ſinfull ſoule. This is the beginning of Converſion, theſe very conceits; and *when wee are converted, theſe thoughts entertained with admiration of Chriſts condeſcending, are effectuall to give Chriſt further entrance into the ſoule,* vvhereby a more happie communion is vvrought ſtill more and more betvveen Chriſt, and the ſoule of a Chriſtian.

Isa. 61. 1.

Mat 11. 28.

Isa. 55. 1.

Mat. 5. 3, 5.

Oh, but take heed that theſe make not any ſecure. For if vve give not entrance to Chriſt, all this vvill be a further aggravation of our Damnation. Hovv vvill this juſtifie the ſentence upon us hereafter, vvhen Chriſt ſhall ſet us on the left hand, and ſay *Depart from mee,* for I invited

Vſe. 2.

Mat. 25.

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invited you to come to me, I knocked at the doore of your hearts, and you would give me no entrance, *Depart from us* ſaid you, therefore now *Depart you from mee.* What doe prophane perſons in the Church? but bid Chriſt depart from them, eſpecially in the motions of his Spirit, they entertaine him in the outward roome, the braine; they know a little of Chriſt, but in the heart, the ſecret roome, hee muſt not come there to rule. Is it not equall, that hee ſhould bid us, *Depart yee curſed I know you not?* you would not give entrance to mee, I will not now to you; as to the fooliſh Virgins he ſpeakes, and *Prov.* 1.28. Wiſedome knockes, and hath no entrance, therefore in times of danger, they call upon Her, but ſhee rejoyceth at their deſtruction; Where God magnifies his mercie in this kinde in ſweete allurements, and inviting by Judgements, Mercies, Miniſtrie, and Spirit, hee will magnifie his Judgement after. Thoſe that have neglected Heaven with the Prerogatives, and advantages in this kind, they ſhall be caſt into Hell. *Woe to thee Chorazin,* &c. as you know in the Goſpell. This is one thing that may humble us of this place and nation, that Chriſt hath no further entrance, nor better entertainement after ſo long knocking? for the entertaining of his vvord, is the welcomming of himſelfe, as it is, *Colloſſ.* 3.16. *Let the word of God dwell plentifully in you. And let Chriſt dwell in your hearts by faith. Epheſ.* 3.17. Compare thoſe places, let the word dwell plenteouſly

Mat. 23.41.

Mat. 11.21.

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in you by wisdome, and let Christ dwell in your hearts by faith. For then doth Christ dwell in the heart, when the truth dwells in us. Therefore what entertainement we give to his truth, wee give to himselfe. Now what meanes of knocking hath hee not used among us a long time? For *workes* of all sorts; he hath drawne us *by the cords of a man*, by all kind of favours. For *Mercies*, How many deliverances have we had (No Nation the like, we are a Miracle of the Christian World,) from forreigne invasion, and Domesticall conspiracies at home? How many mercies doe we enjoy? *Abundance together with long peace, and plenty.* Besides, if this would not doe, God hath added *Corrections* with all these, in every Eliment, in every manner, Infection in the aire, Judgements in inundations; We have had rumours of warres, &c. threatnings, shakings of the rod onely, but such as might have awaked us, And then he hath knocked at our hearts by the example of other Nations. By what hee hath done to them, he hath shewed us what he might justly have done to us, wee are no better then they.

As for his *Ministeriall knocking*; above threescore yeares wee have lived under the Ministerie of the Gospell, this Land hath beene *Goshen*, a land of light, when many other places are in darkenesse, especially wee that live in this *Goshen*, this place, and such like, where the light shines in a more abundant measure.

Ministers

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Mat. 11. 17.

Miniſters have beene ſent, and varietie of gifts, there hath beene piping, and mourning (as Chriſt complaines in his time) that they were like froward Children, that neither ſweet piping, nor dolefull mourning would moove to be tractable to their fellowes, they had *Iohn* who came mourning, and Chriſt comforting with bleſſing in his mouth, all kind of meanes have beene uſed.

And *for the Motions of his Spirit*, who are there at this time, who thus live in the Church under the Miniſterie, who cannot ſay that God thereby hath ſmote their hearts, thoſe hard rockes againe and againe, and awaked their conſciences, partly with corrections publike and perſonall, and partly with benefits: yet notwithſtanding what little way is given to Chriſt? Many are indifferent, and lukewarme either way, but rather incline to the worſt.

Let us then conſider of it, The greater meanes, the greater judgements afterwards, if we be not won by them. Therefore let us labour to hould Chriſt, to entertaine him, let him have the beſt roome in our ſoules, to dwell in our hearts, let us give up the keyes to him, and deſire him to rule our underſtandings, to know nothing but him, and what may ſtand with his truth, Not to yeeld to any errour, or corruption; let us deſire that hee would rule in our wills, and affections, ſway all, give all to him; for that is his meaning; when hee ſaies, *Open to mee*, ſo that I may rule, as in mine owne houſe,

as

as the husband rules in his familie, and a King in his Kingdome, hee will have all yeelded up to him, And hee comes to beate downe all whatsoever is exalted against him, and that is the reason men are so loath to open unto him. They know if they open to the Spirit of God, hee will turne them out of their fooles Paradice, and make them resolve upon other courses of life, which because they will not turne unto, they repell the sweet motions of the Spirit of Christ, and pull away his Graces, building bullwarkes against Christ, as lusts, strange imaginations, and resolutions. Let the Ministers say what they will, and the Spirit moove as he will, thus they live, and thus they will live. Let us take notice therefore of all the meanes that God useth to the state, and to us in particular, and every one labour to amend one. Every soule is the Temple, the House Christ should dwell in, let every soule therefore among us consider what meanes Christ useth to come into his soule to dwell with him, and to rule there. 2 Cor. 10.

And what shall wee loose by it? Doe wee entertaine Christ to our losse? Doth hee come emptie? Noe, he comes with all Grace, his *Goodnesse* is a Communicative, diffusive goodnesse; *Hee comes to spread his Treasures, to inrich the heart with all Grace and strength to beare all afflictions, to encounter all dangers, to bring peace of Conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost; hee comes* (indeed) *to make our hearts* (as it were) *a heaven.* *Considerations inforcing us to entertaine Christ.*

Doe

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Doe but consider this, hee comes not for his owne ends; but to emptie his goodnesse into our hearts, as a breast that desires to emptie it selfe, when it is full. Soe this fountaine, hath the fulnesse of a fountaine, which strives to emptie his goodnesse into our soules; he comes out of love to us; Let these considerations melt our hearts for our unkindnesse, that we suffer him to stand so long at the doore knocking, as it is said heere.

If wee find not our suits answered so soone as we would; Remember, we have made him also waite for us; perhaps to humble us, and after that to incourage us, he will make us waite, for we have made him waite. Let us not give over, for certainely he that desires us to open, that he may powre out his Graces upon us, he will not reject us when we come to him, If he answers us not at first, yet he will at last, Let us goe on, and waite, seeing there is no one duty pressed more in Scripture then this. And wee see it is equitie, *Hee waites for us*, it is good reason wee should waite for him, if we have not comfort presently, when wee desire it, let us attend upon Christ, as he hath attended upon us, for when he comes, hee comes with advantage; so that when we waite, wee loose nothing thereby, but are gainers by it, encreasing our patience. The longer wee waite, hee comes with the more abundant Grace and comfort in the end, and shewes himselfe rich, and bountifull to them that waite upon him.

Math. 7. 7.
Habak. 2. 3.
Isa. 30. 18.
Isa. 60. 16.
Isa. 64. 3.
James. 1. 4.
Isa. 40.

The end of the fift Sermon.

THE SIXT SERMON.

CANT. V. II.

It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh, saying, open unto me, my love, my dove, my undefiled, &c.

IN the first part of this verse, hath beene handled the Churches own condition which shee was in, after some blessed feelings that shee had of the love of Christ.

Now in the next words the Church sets downe an acknowledgement of the carriage of Christ to her in this her sleepie condition.

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It is the voice of my Beloved that knocks, saying, Open to mee my Sister, my Love, my Dove, &c. She acknowledgeth Christs voice in her sleepie estate, and sets downe his carriage thus, *how hee knockes,* and then also speakes, *Open to mee,* And then sets downe what hee suffered for her, *My head is filled with dew, and my locks with the dropps of the night.* And that nothing might be wanting that might moove her heart to respect this his carriage towards her, he useth sweete titles, a loving compellation, *Open to mee* (saith he,) *my Sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled,* as so many cords of love to draw her, so here wants neither loving carriage, sweet words, nor patience; *It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh.*

The Church as she takes notice of the voice of Christ, so shee doth also of the meanes he useth, and seeth his love in them all. *It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh, saying, open to mee,* &c. Here is also an other distinguishing note of a sound Christian from an unsound, A sanctified spirit sees Christ in the meanes, this is, sayes the heart, the word of Christ, and this the mercie of Christ to take such paines with my soule, to send his Ministers, to provide his ordinances, to give gifts to men, and men to the Church. *It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh.*

Ephes. 4. 12.

That Christs knocking is especially by the Ministery of the Word.

But wee must especially understand it of the Ministeriall voice, whereby Christ doth chiefly make way for himselfe into the heart, and that by

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by all kind of wayes diſpenſed therein: as gifts of all ſorts, ſome rougher, ſome milder, all kind of Methods and wayes in the Miniſtery to make way for himſelfe, Firſt of all by the threatnings of the Law, and by terrours, as *Iohn* was ſent before Chriſt, and as the ſtorme went before the ſtill and calme voice, wherein God came to *Elias*, ſo he uſeth all kind of courſes in the Miniſtery; and Miniſters by the direction of the Spirit turne themſelves, as it were, into all ſhapes and faſhions both of ſpeech and Spirit to win people to God, in ſo much that God appeales to them, *What could I have done more for my Church, that I have not done?* 1 King. 19. 12. Iſa. 5. 1.

Therefore let us take notice of this voyce of Chriſt in the vvord, and not thinke as good *Samuel* thought, that *Eli* ſpake, when God ſpake; let us thinke that God ſpeakes to us in the Miniſtery, that Chriſt comes to woe us, and win us thereby. *Vſe.* 1 Sam. 3. 5.

And wee Miniſters are the friends of the Bridegroome, who are to heare what Chriſt ſaith and would have ſaid to the Church, and we muſt pray to him, that he would teach us what to teach others. We are to procure the contract, and to perfect it till the marriage be in heaven, that is our worke.

And you that are hearers if you doe not regard Chriſts ſweete voyce in the Miniſtery, which God hath appointed for the governement of the world, know, that there is a voice that you cannot ſhake of. That peremptorie voice at the

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day of judgement, when he will say, *Goe yee cursed into hell fire*, &c. And that God who delights to be stiled *a God hearing prayer*, will not heare thee, but saith *Such a one as turnes his eare away from hearing the Law, his prayer is abominable.* It is a dolefull thing, that hee that made us, and allureth us in the Ministery, that followes us with all evidences of his love, and adds together with the Ministery many sweet motions of his Spirit, that he should delight in the destruction of his creatures, and not indure the sight of them, *Depart away from me yee cursed into hell fire*, &c. There are scarce any in the Church, but Christ hath allured at one time or other to come in, and in many he opens their understandings in a great measure, and knocks upon their hearts, that they (as it were) halfe open unto Christ, like *Agrippa* that said to *Paul*, *Thou almost perswadest mee to be a Christian.* So Herod *did many things, and he heard gladly.* They are halfe open, seeme to open, but are not effectually converted, but at last they see, that further yeelding will not stand with that which they resolve not to part with; their lusts, their present condition that they make their God, and their heaven, whereupon they shutte the doore againe, when they have opened it a little to the motions of Gods Spirit, they dare give no further way, because they cannot learne the first lesson in Christs schoole, to denie themselves, and take up their crosse.

Mat. 25.

Prov. 28. 9.

Act. 26. 28.

Mark. 6. 20.

This is an undoubted conclusion, our blessed Saviour

Saviour giveth ſuch meanes and motions of his Spirit to the vileſt perſons in the Church, that their owne hearts tell them, they have more meanes and ſweeter motions, then they yeeld to, and *that the ſentence of condemnation is not pronounced upon them for meerely not knowing of Chriſt, but upon ſome grounds of rebellion*, in that they goe not ſo farre as they are provoked, and put on by the Spirit of God, they reſiſt the holy Spirit. *There can bee no reſiſtance where there is not a going beyond the deſire and will of him whom hee reſiſteth.* A man doth not reſiſt, when hee gives way as farre as he is mooved. There is no wicked man in the Church, that gives ſo much way as he is mooved and ſtirred to by the Spirit and word of God. Acts. 7 31.

Away then with theſe impudent, ungracious Objections about Gods Decree for matter of Election, let us make it ſure, and for any ill conceits that may riſe in our hearts about that other of reprobation let this dampe them all, that in the Church of God, hee offers unto the vileſt wretch ſo much meanes with the motions of his Spirit, as he reſiſting, proves inexcuſable, his owne rebellion therefore being the cauſe of his rejection. Let men ceaſe from cavilling, God hath *that* in their owne breaſt, in the heart of every carnall man, which will ſpeake for God againſt him, and ſtop his mouth that hee ſhall be ſilent, and ſpeechleſſe at the day of judgement. Mat. 22. 12.

Thus we ſee that Chriſt doth condeſcend ſo

low as to account it almoſt a part of his happineſſe to have our ſoules for a Temple to dwell in, to rule there. Therefore he makes all this earneſt ſuit, with ſtrong expreſſions what he ſuffereth.

And ſince Chriſt beares this great and large affection to his poore Church, It may incourage us to pray heartily for the ſame, and to ſpread before God the ſtate thereof. *Why Lord? it is that part of the world that is thy Siſter, thy Love, thy Dove, thy undefiled: the Communion with whom thou liveſt above all the world beſides.* It is a ſtrong argument to prevaile with God. Therefore let us commend the ſtate of the Church at this time, or at any time with this confidence. *Lord, it is the Church that thou loveſt.* They thought they prevailed much with Chriſt when thy laboured to bring him to *Lazarus*, ſaying, *Lord, Hee whom thou loveſt is ſicke.* So ſay wee, *The Church whom thou loveſt, that is thy onely love, In whom thy love is concenterate* (as it were) *and gathered to a head,* (as though thou hadſt no other *love* in the world but thy *Church*) *this thy love is in this ſtate and condition.* It is good to thinke of prevailing arguments, not to moove God ſo much, as our owne hearts, to ſtrengthen our faith to prevaile with God, which is much fortified with the conſideration of Chriſts wonderous loving expreſſion to his poore Church. Then, come to Chriſt, offer thy ſelfe, and he will meet thee. Are not two loving well-wiſhers well met? *When thou offereſt thy*

Ioh. 11. 3.

Simile.

ſelfe

selfe to him, and hee seekes thy love, will hee reject thee when thou commest to him that seekes thy love, and seeketh it in this passionate, affectionate manner, as hee doth? Therefore, be of good comfort. Hee is more willing to entertaine us then we are to come to him.

That the Relapsed need not desperately to be discouraged.

And for those that have relapsed any kind of way, let them not be discouraged to returne againe to Christ; the Church here was in a drowsie sleepie estate, and used him unkindly, yet he is so patient, that hee waites her leisure as it were and saith, *Open to mee my Sister, my love,* &c. *Thomas* was so untoward, that hee would not beleeve, *Vnlesse hee did see the print of the nailes,* &c. in Christs bodie. Yet Christ was so gratious as hee condescendeth to poore *Thomas*, so to *Peter* after hee was fallen, and to the Church after backsliding.

Open to me my Sister, &c.

Hence Observe further,

Observ.

That Christ hath never enough of his Church till he hath it in Heaven, where are indeed the kisses of the Spouse, and of Christ, In the meane while *Open, Open* still. Christ had the heart of the Spouse in some measure already, but yet there were some corners of the heart that were not so filled with Christ as they should be, hee was not so much in her understanding, will, joy, delight, and love, as hee would be: therefore, *Open thy understanding more and more* to imbrace me, and divine truths that are offered thee; *Open thy love* to solace

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me more and more. For God in Chriſt having condeſcended to the tearmes of friendſhip nay to intimate tearmes of friendſhip in marriage with us. Therefore as the Church in her right temper, hath never enough of Chriſt, but deſires further union, and communion ſtill, It being the deſcription of the people of God, that *they love the appearance of Chriſt*, as they loved his firſt appearance, and waited for *the conſolation of Iſraell*; ſo they love his ſecond appearing, and are never quiet, till hee comes againe in the fleſh, to conſummate the marriage begun heere: ſo Chriſt alſo he is as deſirous of them, yea they are his deſires that breed their deſires; *Open to mee my Siſter, my love, my dove*, &c. Againe his *Love* and *pittie* mooves him to deſire further to come into us: Chriſt knowes what is in our hearts, if he bee not there, there is that, that ſhould not bee there. What is in the braine where Chriſt is not? a deale of worldly projects nothing worth. What is in our joy, if Chriſt bee not there? worldly joy, which cleaves to things worſe then it ſelfe. If a man were anatomized, and ſeene into, hee would be aſhamed of himſelfe, if hee did ſee himſelfe, Chriſt therefore out of pittie to our ſoules, would not have the Divell there; Chriſt knowes it is good for our ſoules to give way to him, therefore he uſeth all ſweet allurements, *Open to mee my Siſter, my love*, &c. Chriſt hath never his fill, till he cloſe with the ſoule perfectly, ſo that nothing be in the ſoule above him,

2 Tim. 4. 18. Revel. 21. 20.

nothing

nothing equall to him, therfore *Open, Open,* ſtill.

Againe, He ſets downe to moove the Church the more to open to him the inconveniences that hee indured, *My head is filled with dew,* &c. wherein hee ſhewes what he ſuffered, which ſufferings are of two ſorts. *In himſelfe. In his Miniſters.* In himſelfe and in his owne bleſſed perſon, what did he endure? what patience had hee in enduring the refractorie ſpirits of men when he was here? how many indignities did he digeſt in his Diſciples after their converſion? Towards his latter end, his Head was not onely filled with the dropps, but his bodie filled with drops of bloud. Drops of bloud came from him, becauſe of the anguiſh of his Spirit, and the ſenſe of Gods wrath for our ſinnes. Upon the Croſſe, what did hee indure there? that ſenſe of Gods anger there was onely for our ſinnes. *My God my God, why haſt thou forſaken mee?* Mat. 27. What ſhould wee ſpeake of his going up and downe doing good, preaching in his owne perſon, ſetting whole nights apart for prayer; And then for what hee ſuffers in his Miniſters? there he knocks, and ſaith, *Open in them.* And how was hee uſed in the Apoſtles that were after him, and in the Miniſters of the Church ever ſince, What have they indured? for he put a ſpirit of patience upon them. And what indignities indured they in the Primitive Church, that were the publiſhers of the Goſpell, thoſe ſweet publiſhers thereof, drawing men to open to Chriſt, were killed for preaching. So cruell is

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is the heart, that it offereth violence to them, that love them most, that love their soules. And what greater love, then the love of the soule? yet this is the Satanicall temper and disposition of mens hearts, they hate those men most, that deale this way most truely and lovingly with them. It is not that the Gospell is such an hard message. It is the word of Reconciliation, and the word of life, but the heart hates it, because it would draw men from their present condition, and *Therefore Condemnation is come into the world, in that men hate the light, because their workes are evill.* Is there any thing truely and cordially hated but Grace? and are any persons heartily and cordially hated in the world so much as the Promulgers and Publishers of Grace, and the Professours of it, because it upbraids most of all, and meddles with the corruptions of men, that are dearer to them then their owne soules.

Iohn. 3. 19.

Now what patience is there in Christ to suffer himselfe in his messengers, and his children to be thus used? Nor it is not strange to say that Christ stands thus in his Ministers, for 1 *Pet.* 3. 19. It is said, *That Christ by his Spirit preached in the daies of Noah to the soules now in prison,* Christ preached in *Noahs* time before he was Incarnate, much more doth he preach now: and as he was patient then to endure the old World, unto whom *Noah* preached a hundred and twenty yeares, so he is patient now in his Ministers to preach still by the same Spirit,

Even

Even to us ſtill, and yet the enteatainement in many places is (as *Paul* complaines,) *though the more I love you, yet the leſſe I am beloved of you.* 2 Cor. 12. 15.

Let theſe things moove us to be patient towards God and Chriſt, if we be corrected in any kind, conſidering that Chriſt is ſo patient towards us, and to waite upon him with patience. How long hath he waited for our converſion? how long doth hee ſtill waite for the through giving up of our ſoules to him? Shall we thinke much then to waite a little while for him? *Vſe.* 1.

And let this Spirit of Chriſt ſtrengthen us likewiſe in our dealing with others, as to beare with evill men, and as it is. 2 *Tim.* 2. 25, 26. *To waite if God will at any time give them repentance.* Neither may we be ſo ſhort ſpirited that if we have not an anſwer preſently to give over. Wee ſhould imitate Chriſt heere, never give over as long as God continues life with any advantage and opportunitie to doe good to any ſoule, waite, if God at any time will give them Grace. *Open to mee my Siſter, my love,* &c. *Vſe.* 2.

Let this againe worke upon us, that our Saviour Chriſt here would thus ſet forth his love, and his patience in his love, in bearing with us thus under the reſemblance of a ſilly ſuitor that comes afarre off and ſtands at the doore, and knocks, that Chriſt ſhould ſtoope thus in ſeeking the good of our ſoules, Let this winn, and quicken our hearts with all readineſſe, and thankfullneſſe to receive him *when hee comes to worke in our ſoules,* conſidering, that Chriſt hath ſuch a care of

of us by himſelfe, his Miniſters, and the motions of his Spirit, who joynes with his Miniſtrie; let not us therefore be careleſſe of our owne ſoules; but let it moove our hearts to melt to him. The motives may be ſeene more in the particular compellations, *Open to mee my Siſter, my Love,* &c.

My Siſter.

This was ſpoken of before in the former verſe. The Church of God is Chriſts *Siſter* and *Spouſe*, we are knit to him both by *Conſanguinitie*, and by *Affinitie*. The neereſt affinitie is *Marriage*: and the neereſt Conſanguinitie is *Siſter*. So that there are all Bonds to knit us to Chriſt; Whatſoever is ſtrong in any bond, he knits us to him by it. Is there any love in an *Husband*, a *Brother*, a *Mother*, a *Friend*, in an *Head* to the members? in any thing in the world? Is there any *love* ſcattered in any relation, gather it all into one, and all that love, and a thouſand times more then that, is in Chriſt in a more eminent manner, therefore he ſtiles himſelfe in all theſe ſweet relations, to ſhew that he hath the love of all, will a Siſter ſhut out a Brother, when the Brother comes to viſit her, and doe her all good? is this unkindneſſe even in Nature to looke ſtrangely upon a man that is neere a kin, that comes and ſaith, *Open to mee my Siſter*? If the Siſter ſhould ſhut out the Brother, were it not moſt unnaturall? And is it not monſtrous in Grace? when our Brother comes for our good, and in pittie to our ſoules

Math. 12.

to

to let him ſtand without doores? Remember that Chriſt hath the ſame affections, to account us *Brothers* and *Siſters* now in Heaven, as he had when hee was upon the Earth, For after his reſurrection (ſaith he to his Diſciples) *I goe to my God, and to your God, to my Father, and to your Father*; hee calls himſelfe our Brother, having one common Father in Heaven, and one Spirit, and one inheritance,&c, This is a ſweet relation, Chriſt beeing our Brother, his heart cannot but melt towards us in any affliction. *Ioſeph* diſſembled a while out of politicke wiſedome, but becauſe hee had a Brothers heart to *Benjamin*, therefore at laſt hee could not hould, but melted into teares, though hee made his countenance, as though he had not regarded. So our *Ioſeph* now in Heaven, may ſeeme to withdraw all tokens, and ſignes of Brotherly love from us, and not to owne us, but it is onely in ſhew, hee is our Brother ſtill, his heart firſt or laſt, will melt towards his Bretheren to their wonderfull comfort. *My Siſter*,&c.

Ioh. 20.17.

Gen. 42.

My Love.

That word we had not yet. It is worthy alſo a little ſtanding on; for all theſe foure words bee (as it were) the attractive cords to draw the *Spouſe*, not onely by ſhewing what hee had ſuffered, but by ſweet titles, *My Love, My Dove.*

What had Chriſt no love but his *Spouſe*? did his love goe out of his own heart to her (as it were?) It is ſtrange, yet true, Chriſts love is ſo great to his

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his Church and Children, and ſo continuall to it, that his Church and People and every Chriſtian ſoule is the ſeate of his love, *That love in his owne breaſt beeing in them, they are his love,* becauſe hee himſelfe is there, and one with them.

Ioh. 17. *ult.*

Hee loves all his Creatures, they have all ſome beames of his goodneſſe, *Which hee muſt needes love,* therefore hee loves them as creatures, and as they be more or leſſe capable of a higher degree of goodneſſe; but for his Church and Children, they are his love indeed.

But what is the ground of ſuch love?

1. Hee *loves them as hee beholds them in his Fathers choiſe,* as they are Elected of God, and given unto himſelfe in Election: *Thine they are thou gaveſt them mee*; Chriſt looking on us in Gods Election and choyce, loves us.

1.

Ioh. 17. 6.

2. Againe, *Hee loves us, becauſe he ſees his owne Graces in us,* he loves what is *his* in us. Before we be actually his, he loves us with a *love of good will,* to wiſh all good to us; But when we have any thing of his Spirit, that our natures are altered and changed, he loves us with a love of the intimateſt friendſhip; with the love of an *Head, Husband, Friend,* and what we can imagine; hee loves his owne Image. *Paul* ſaith, *That the Wife is the glorie of her Husband*; becauſe whatſoever is in a good Husband, the Wife expreſſeth it by reflection. So *the Church is the glory of Chriſt,* ſhee reflects his excellencies, though in a weake meaſure, they

2.

1 Cor. 11. 7.

ſhew

ſhew forth his Vertues or prayſes, as *Peter* ſpeakes, thus hee ſees his owne Image in her, and the Holy Ghoſt in his Church, hee loves her, and theſe in her: ſo as whether we regard the Father, or himſelfe, or his Spirit, the Church is his *Love*.

If we conſider alſo what he hath done and ſuffered for her, wee may well ſay the Church is his *love*. 3. Beſides the former favours, (not to ſpeake of Election, hee chooſed us before we were) In time hee did chooſe us by actuall Election by which he called us: we had an exiſtence, but we reſiſted, he called us when we reſiſted; and then alſo he juſtified us, and cloathed us with his owne Righteouſneſſe, and after feedes us with his owne Bodie. As the ſoule is the moſt excellent thing in the world, ſo he hath provided for it the moſt excellent ornaments. It hath foode and ornaments proportionable. What love is this, that he ſhould feede our ſoules with his owne Bodie, and cloathe us with his owne Righteouſneſſe. *Hee loved mee* (ſaith *Paule*) what was the effect of his love? *Hee gave himſelfe for mee.* Hee gave himſelfe both that wee might have a Righteouſneſſe to cloathe us with in the ſight of God, and he gave himſelfe, that he might be the bread of life, *My fleſh is meate indeed, and my bloud is drinke indeed.* The guiltie, the ſelfe accuſing ſoule feedes upon Chriſt dying for its ſinnes. Againe, *Revel.* 1.6. you have his love ſet forth, *Hee loved us*, and how doth he witneſſe it? *Hee hath waſhed us*

Gal. 2.20.

Joh. 6.55.

with

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with his owne bloud, and hath made us Kings, and Prieſts, &c. the like you have, *Epheſ.5. Hee loved us, and gave himſelfe a ſweete Sacrifice to God for us.* When this world is at an end, we ſhall ſee what his love is; hee is not ſatisfied, till we be all in one place. What doth he pray for to his Father, *Ioh.17.24. Father I will, that thoſe whom thou haſt given me be with me where I am*, &c. runne through all the whole courſe of Salvation, Election, Vocation, Juſtification, Glorification, you ſhall ſee his love in all of them. But it were an infinite argument to follow, to ſhew the love of Chriſt, which is beyond all knowledge, and it is too large for us to know all the dimenſions of it, to ſee the height, breadth, depth, and length of it, which wee ſhould ever thinke ſpeake and meditate of, becauſe the ſoule is then in the moſt fit temper to ſerve, love, and glorifie God, when it is moſt apprehenſive of his great love.

Eph.4.16.

Deductions out of the word Love.

This phraſe imports diverſe things, *That there is no ſaving love to any out of the Church*, which is his *love*. It is (as it were) confined in the Church, as if all the beames of his love met in that center, as we ſee when the beames of the Sunne meete in a glaſſe, they burne, becauſe many are there united. So in the Church all his love doth meete.

1.

2. Then the Church is his love alſo, Becauſe whatſoever ſhee hath or hopes for, is from his love, and is nothing but his love. The Church as it is a Church is nothing but the love of Chriſt.

That

that there is a Church so endowed, so graced, so full of the hope of glorie, it is out of his love.

And for the properties of it. It is a *free love, a preventing love*; he loved us before ever we could love him; he loved us when we resisted him, and were his enemies. *Properties of it.*

It is a most tender love, as you have it Isa. 49. 15. Can a mother forget her sucking child, if she should yet will not I forget thee? thou art written on the palmes of my hands, &c. He hath us in his hart, in his eye, in his hand, in a mothers hart, and beyond it; he hath a tender eye and a powerfull hand to maintaine his church. 2. Deut. 33. 2.

It is *a most transcendent*, and carefull love, all comparisons are under it. 3.

And it is *a most intimate invincible love*, that nothing could quench it, as we se heere the Church droupeth, and had many infirmities, yet she is Christs love, so that the love of Christ is a kinde of love that is unconquerable, no water will ever quench it, no sinne of ours, no infirmitie; So as it is very comfortable that the Church considered under infirmities is yet the *love of* Christ, *I sleepe, but my hart waketh*, yet Christ comes with *my love, my dove*, &c. 4.

But what cannot Christ see matter of weakenesse, sinfullnesse, hatred, and dislike in the Church? *Quest.*

Oh yes, to pitty, helpe, and heale it, but not at all to diminish his love, but to manifest *Answ.*

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it so much the more. His love is a tender love, sensible of all things wherewith we displease him, yet it is so invincible and unconquerable, that it overcomes all. Againe he sees ill indeed in us, but he sees in us some good of his owne also, which moves him more to love, then that that is ill in us, moves him to hate, for what he sees of ours, he sees with a purpose to vanquish, mortifie, and eate it out; the Spirit is as fire to consume it, He is as water to wash it, but what he sees of his owne, he sees with a purpose to encrease it more and more, and to perfect it, therefore he sayes *my Love*, notwithstanding that the Church was *a sleepe*.

Vse. This therefore serves greatly for our comfort, to search what good Christ by his Spirit hath wrought in our harts, what faith, what love, what sanctified judgement, what fire of holy affections to him, and to the best things, O let us value our selves by that that is good, that Christ hath in us. We are Christs love notwithstanding we are sleepie, if we be displeased with this our state, that as Christ dislikes it, so if we by the Spirit dislike it, the matter is not what sinne we have in vs; but how we are affected to it. Have we that ill in us, which is truly the griefe of our harts and soules, which as Christ dislikes, so we abhorre it, and would be purged, and ridd of it; and it is the griefe of our harts and soules, that we cannot be better, and more lovely in Christs eye: then let us not be discouraged. For

Christ

Christ esteemes of his Church highly, even as his *very love*, even at that time when she was sleepie. And may teach us in time of temptation not to hearken to Sathan, who then moves us to looke altogether upon that which is naught in us, thereby to abate our love to Christ and our apprehension of his to us; for he knowes if we be sensible of the love of Christ to us, we shall love him againe. For love is a kinde of fire, an active quality, which will set us about glorifying God, and pulling downe Sathans kingdome; As we say in nature (*fire doth all*) what worke almost can a man worke without fire, by which all instruments are made and heated &c. So grace doth all with *love*; God first doth manifest to our soules his love to us in Christ, and quicken us by his Spirit, witnessing his love to us wherewith he warmes our harts, kindles and inflames them so with love, that we love him againe, which love hath a constraining sweet violence to put us upon all duties, to suffer, to do, to resist any thing. If a man be in love with Christ, what will be harsh to him in the world? the divell knowes this well enough, therefore one of his maine engines, and temptations is to weaken our harts in the sence of Gods love and of Christs. Therefore let us be as wise for our soules as he is subtill, and politique against them; as watchfull for our owne comfort, as he is to discomfort us, and make us despaire. Let us be wise to gather all the arguments of Christs

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love, that we can.

Quest. *But how shall we know that Christ loves us in this peculiar manner?*

Answ. First, Search what course he takes and hath taken to draw thee neerer unto *him*; *he chastiseth every one that he loveth.* Seasonable corrections sanctified is a signe of Christs love, when he will not suffer us to thrive in sinne, when we cannot speake nor doe amisse; but either he lasheth us in our conscience for it, and by his Spirit checks us, or else stirrs up others, one thing or other to make us out of love with sinne.

Heb. 12.

2. Againe, we may gather Christs love by this, if we have any love to divine things and can set a great price upon the best things, upon the word, because it is Christs word; upon grace, prizing the image of Christ, and the new creature, when we can set an high value upon communion with Christ, the sence of his love in our hearts and all spirituall prerogatives, and excellencies above all things, this is an excellent argument of Christs love to us, Our love is but a reflection of his, and therefore if we have love to any thing that is good, we have it from him first. If a wall that is cold become hot, we say, *the Sunne*, of necessity must shine on it first, because it is nothing but cold stone of it selfe. So if our hearts, that are naturally cold be heated with the love of divine things, certainely we may say, Christ hath shined here first: for naturally our harts

are

are of a cold temper, there is no such thing as spirituall love growing in our natures and harts.

You have many poore soules helped with this, who cannot tell whether Christ love them or noe, but this helpes them a little, they can find undoubted arguments of their love to Christ, his Jmage and servants, and of relishing the word, though they find much corruption; and this their love to divine things tells them by demonstrations from the effects, *that Christ loves them*, because there is no love to divine, and supernaturall things without the love of Christ first. And the graces in our hearts, they are love tokens given to the spouse. Common favours he gives, as *Abraham* gifts to his servants and others, but speciall gifts to his spouse, if therefore there be any grace, a tender and soft heart, a prizing of heavenly things, love to Gods people and truth, then we may comfortly conclude Christ loves us, not only because they are reflections of Gods love, but because they are iewels and ornaments that Christ onely bestowes upon his spouse, and not upon reprobates, such pretious iewells as these. 3. Ioh. 15. 15. Psal. 25.

By discovering his secrets to us, for that is an argument of love. Doth Christ by his Spirit discover the secret love he hath borne to us before all worlds? doth he discover the breast of his father, and his owne heart to us? this discovery of secret affections, of intire love sheweth our happie state; for that is one prerogative of friend-

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freindship, and the cheefest discovery of secrets, when he gives us a particular right to truthes, as our owne, that we can goe challenge them, these are mine, these belong to me, these promises are mine, this discovery of the secret love of God, and of the intereſt we have in the promises, is a signe that Christ loves us, and that in a peculier manner we are his love.

Vse. 1.

1. *Reproose.*

Let us be like our blessed Saviour, that where wee see any saving goodnesse in any let us love them: for should not our love meete with our Saviours love. Shall the Church of God be the love of Christ, and shall it be our hatred? Shall a good christian be Chists *love*, and shall he be the object of my hatred and scorne? can we imitate a better patterne? O let us never thinke our estate to be good, except every child of God be our love as hee is Christs love. Can I love Christ, and cannot I love him in whom I see Christ? It is a signe that I hate himselfe, when I hate his Image. It is to bee wondered at that the Divell hath prevailed with any so much, as to thinke they should be in a good estate, when they have hearts rising against the best people, and who as they grow in grace, so they grow in there dislike of them. Is heere the Spirit of Christ? And let them likewise be here reproved, that are glad to see any Christian hault, slip, and goe awry. The best Christians in the world have that in part, which is wholly in another man; he hath flesh in him. Shall we utterly distaste a Christian for that? The

2. *Reproose.*

Church

Church was now in a ſleepie condition, and yet notwithſtanding Chriſt takes not the advantage of the weakeneſſe of the Church to caſheere, and to hate her, but he pitties her the more, and takes a courſe to bring her againe into a good ſtate and condition. Let us not therefore be glad at the infirmities and failings of any, that diſcover any true goodneſſe in them; it may be our owne caſe ere long, it caſts them not out of Chriſts love, but they dwell in his love ſtill, why ſhould we then caſt them out of our love and affections? Let them be *our love* ſtill, as they are the *love* of *Chriſt*, notwithſtanding their infirmities.

* * *

The end of the Sixt Sermon.

7 AP 53

THE SEVENTH SERMON.

Cant. V. II. III.

My Love, my Dove, my Vndefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the dropps of the night.

I have put of my conte, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?

THat the life of a Christian is a perpetuall conflicting, appeares evidently in this Booke, the passages whereof joyned with our owne experiences, sufficiently declare what combats, Tryalls, and temptations the Saints are subject unto after

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after their new birth and change of life, now up, now downe, now full of good resolutions, now againe sluggish and slow not to be waked, nor brought forwards by the voice of Christ, as it was with the Church here, shee will not out of her sleepe to open unto Christ, though he call and knocke, and stand waiting for entrance. She is now desirous to pittie her selfe, and needs no *Peter* to stirre her up unto it, the flesh of it selfe is prone enough to draw backe, and make excuses to hinder the power of grace from its due operation in us. She is layed along (as it were) to rest her; yet is not she so asleepe, but shee discernes the voice of Christ, but up and rise she will not

Ioh. 3. 6. Thus we may see the truth of that speech of our Saviour verified, *That which is borne of the flesh is flesh, and that which is borne of the Spirit is Spirit.* The flesh pulls her backe, the Spirit would raise her up to open to Christ, he in the meane while makes her inexcusable, and prepares her by his knocking, waiting and departing: as for a state of further *Humiliation*, so for an estate of further *Exaltation*. But how lovingly doth he speake to her?

Open unto me my Love,

Why my Love. 1. Hee calles her *my Love*, especially for two respects; partly because *his love was setled upon her*, it was in his owne breast, but it rested not there, but seated it selfe upon, and in the heart of his spouse, so that shee became Christs love. Wee know the heart of a lover is more where

where it loves, then where it lives, (as we uſe to ſpeake) and indeed, there is a kind of a going out (as it were) to the thing beloved with a heedleſneſſe of all other things, where the affection is in any exceſſe, it carries the whole ſoule with it.

But beſides this, when Chriſt ſaith *my love*, 2.
he ſhews, that as his love goes, and plants, and ſeates it ſelfe in the *Church*, ſo it is united to that, and is not ſcattered to other objects. There are beames of Gods generall love ſcattered in the whole World, but this love, this exceeding love, is onely faſtened upon the *Church*. And indeed there is no love comparable to this love of Chriſt, which is above the love of Woemen, of Father, or Mother, If we conſider what courſe he takes to ſhew it; For there could be nothing in the world ſo great to diſcover his love, as this gift, and gift of himſelfe, And therefore hee gave himſelfe (the beſt thing in Heaven or in Earth) withall to ſhew his love, *The Father gave him*, when he was God equall with his Father, he loved his Church, and gave himſelfe for it; how could he diſcover his love better, then to take our Nature to ſhew how he loved us? how could he come neerer to us, then by beeing incarnate, ſo to be bone of our bone, and fleſh of our fleſh, and tooke our nature to ſhew how he loved it. *Love drawes things neerer whereſoever it is*; It drew him out of Heaven to the Wombe of the Virgin, there to be incarnate, and after that, when he was borne not onely Epheſ. 5. 30.

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onely to be a man, but a miſerable man, becauſe we could not be his ſpouſe unleſſe he purchaſed us by his death. Wee muſt be his ſpouſe by a ſatisfaction made to Divine *Iuſtice*. God would not give us to him, but with ſalving his *Iuſtice*. What ſweete love is it to heale us not by ſearing, or lancing, but by making a plaiſter of his owne bloud, which he ſhed for thoſe that ſhed his in malice and hatred. What a wondrous love is it, that he ſhould powre forth teares for thoſe that ſhed his bloud, *O Ieruſalem, Ieruſalem*, &c. that he prayed for thoſe that perſecuted him? and what wondrous love is it now that he ſympathizeth with us in Heaven, accounting the harme that is done to the leaſt member he hath, as done to himſelfe? *Saul Saul why perſecuteſt thou mee?* and that he ſhould take us into one Body with himſelfe, to make one Chriſt? and he doth not content himſelfe with any thing he can doe for us here, but his deſire is that we may be one with him more and more, and be for ever with him in the heavens, as you have it in that excellent prayer. *Iohn.* 17.24.

Mat. 23. 37.

Acts. 9. 4.

1 Cor. 12.

Now this ſhould ſtirre us up to be fully perſwaded of his love, that loves us ſo much. Chriſts love in us, is as the loadſtone to the Iron, our hearts are heavy and downwards of themſelves. We may eſpecially know his love by this, that it drawes us upwards, and makes us heavenly minded, it makes us deſire further and further communion with him, ſtill there is

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a magneticall attractive force in Christs love, whereſoever it is, it drawes the heart and affections after it.

Vſe.2. And we may know from hence one Argument to proove the ſtability of the Saints, and the immortality of the ſoule, becauſe Chriſt calles the *Church* his *love*. The want of love againe (where it is intire, and in any great meaſure) is amiſerie. Chriſt therefore ſhould ſuffer, if thoſe he hath planted his love upon, whom he loves truely, either ſhould fall away for ever, or ſhould not be immortall for ever. Chriſt will not looſe his love; and as it is an argument of perſevering in Grace; So is it of an everlaſting beeing that this ſoule of ours hath, becauſe it is capable of the love of Chriſt, ſeeing there is a ſweete union, and communion betweene Chriſt and the ſoule. It ſhould make Chriſt miſerable (as it were) in Heaven, the place of happineſſe, if there ſhould not bee a meeting of him and his ſpouſe, there muſt therefore be a meeting, which marriage is for ever, Hoſ. 2. that both may be for ever happy one in an other.

Vſe.3. Let us often warme our hearts with the conſideration hereof, becauſe all our love is from this love of his. Oh the wonderfull love of God, that both ſuch tranſcendent Majeſty, and ſuch an infinite love ſhould dwell together. (We ſay) *Majeſty* and *love* never dwell together, becauſe, *Love is an abaſing of the ſoule to all ſervices*. But herein it is falſe, for here *Majeſty* and *Love* dwell together in the heart of one

one Christ, which Majesty hath stooped as low, as his Almightiy power could give leave. Nay it was an Almighty power, that hee could stoope so low and yet be God keeping his Majesty still. For God to become man, to hide his Majesty for a while, not to be knowne to be God, and to hide so farre in this nature, as to die for us. What an Almighty power was this, that could goe so low and yet preserve himselfe God still, yet this we see in this our blessed Saviour, the greatest Majesty met with the greatest abasement that ever was, and all out of love to our poore soules. There was no stooping, no abasement that was ever so low as Christ was abased unto us, to want for a time even the comfort of the presence of his Father. There was an union of Grace, but the union of solace, and comfort, that he had from him was suspended for a time, out of love to us, for he had a right in his owne Person to be in Heaven presently. Now for him to live so long out of Heaven, and oft times, especially towards his suffering to be without that solace (that he might be a sacrifice for our sinnes) to have it suspended for a time, what a condescending was this? It is said, *Psal.* 113. 6. that God stoopes *To behold the things done here below.* It is indeed a wondrous condescending, that God will looke upon things below; but that hee would become man, and out of love to save us, suffer as he did here, this is wondrous humility to astonishment. We thinke humility is not a

proper

proper grace, becomming the Majesty of God: so it is not indeed, but there is some resemblance of that grace in God, especially in Christ, that he should to reveale himselfe, vaile himselfe with flesh, and all out of love to us, The consideration of these things are wondrous effectuall, as to strengthen *Faith*, so to kindle *Love*. Let these be for a taste to direct our meditations herein. It followes.

My Dove.

We know when Christ was baptised, the Holy Ghost appeared in the shape of a Dove (as a symbole of his presence,) to discover thus much, That Christ should have the propeitie and disposition of a *Dove*, *And be meeke and gentle*. For indeed he became man for that end to be *a mercifull Saviour*. *Learne of me, for I am meeke and lowly*. *And I will not quench the smoaking flaxe, nor breake the bruised reede*, &c. said he, and therefore the Spirit appeared upon him in the shape of a Dove. As likewise, To shew what his office should be; for even as the Dove in *Noahs Arke* was sent out, and came home againe to the *Arke* with an *Olive branch*, to shew that the waters were abated: So Christ was to preach deliverance from the deluge of Gods anger, and to come with an Olive leafe of peace in his mouth, and reconciliation, to shew that Gods wrath was appeased. When he was borne, the Angels sung, *Glory to God on high, on earth peace, and good will towards men*: Now as Christ had the Spirit in the likenesse of

Math. 3.

1.

Mat. 11.29.

Mat. 12.20.

2.

Luk. 2.14.

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a Dove, So all that are Christs, the spouse of Christ, have the disposition of Christ, *that Spirit* that framed him to be like *a Dove*, frames the Church to be *a Dove*, as the oyntment that was powred on *Aarons* head, it ran downe upon the lowest skirts of his garments.

Psal. 133. 3.

Now the *Church* is compared to *a Dove*; partly, *for the disposition that is and should be in the Church resembling that creature.* And partly also, *For that the Church is in a mournfull suffering condition.* 1. For the like disposition as is found in a dove. There is some good in all creatures, there is no creature but it hath a beame of Gods Majesty, of some Attribute, but some more then others. There is an Image of vertue even in the inferiour creatures. Wherefore the Scripture sends us to them for many vertues, as the sluggard to the Ant, and indeed we may see the true perfection of the first Creation, the state of it more in the creatures then in our selves, for there is no such degeneration in any creature as there is in man.

That every Creature hath in it some beame of the Majesty of God.

Properties of the Dove.

1. *Meekenesse.*

Now that which in a Dove the Scripture aimes at, *Wee should resemble a Dove in, is his meekenesse especially.* The Church is meeke both to God and Man, not given to murmurings and revengement; *meeke*, that is, *I held my tongue without murmuring* (as it is in the Psalme) *I was dumbe*, &c. which is a grace that Gods Spirit frames in the heart of the Church, and every particular Christian, even to be meeke towards God by an *holy silence*; And likewise towards

Psal. 39. 2.

towards men to put on the *Bowells of meekeneſſe*, as we are exhorted, *Colloſ.*3.12. *As the elect of God put on the Bowells of meekeneſſe, and compaſſion*,&c. Hereby we ſhall ſhew our ſelves to be Chriſts, and to have the Spirit of Chriſt. And this grace diſpoſeth us to a neerer communion with God then other graces: it is a grace, that God moſt delights in, and would have his ſpouſe to be adorned with, as is ſhewed, 1 *Pet.*3.4. where the Apoſtle tells woemen, it is the beſt Jewell and ornament that they can weare, and is with God of *great price*. *Moſes* we reade, was a mighty man in prayer; and a ſpeciall meanes to helpe and fit him thereunto, was becauſe he was the *meekeſt man on earth*. And therefore, *Zeph.* 2.1, 2. *Seeke the Lord, ſeeke meekeneſſe*. And it fitts a man for communion with God. *For God reſiſteth the proud, and giveth grace to the meeke and humble*. It is a grace that empties the ſoule of ſelfe conceit, to thinke a mans ſelfe unworthy of any thing, and ſo makes it *capacious*, *low*, and fit for God to fill with a larger meaſure of his Spirit; it takes away the roughneſſe and ſwelling of the ſoule, that keepes out God and grace, therefore in that grace wee muſt eſpecially be like this meeke creature, which is no vindicative creature, that hath no way to revenge it ſelfe.

Numb.12.3.

1 Pet.3.5.

Againe *it is a ſimple creature without guile*, it hath no way to defend it ſelfe, but onely by flight. There is a ſimplicity that is ſinfull, when there is no mixture of wiſdom in it. There

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is a ſimplicity, that is a pure ſimplicity, and ſo God is ſimple, which ſimplicity of God is the ground of many other attributes. For therupon hee is *Eternall*, becauſe there is nothing contrarie in him, there is no mixture in him of any thing oppoſite, ſo that is a good ſimplicity in us, when there is no mixture of fraude, no duplicity in the ſoule; *A double hearted man is inconſtant and unſtable in all his wayes.* Now *ſimplicity* as it is a vertue, ſo we muſt imitate the *Dove* in it, for there is a ſinnefull Dove-like ſillyneſſe. For *Hoſea.7.11. Ephraim is ſaid there to be like a ſilly Dove without heart, they call to Egipt, they goe to Aſſiria*, There is a fatall ſimplicity uſually going before deſtruction, when wee hate thoſe that defend us, and account them enemies, and relie more upon them that are enemies indeed then upon friends. So it was with *Ephraim* before his deſtruction, he *was a ſilly Dove without heart, he called to Egipt and went to Aſſyria* (falſe friends) that were enemyes to the Church of God; yet they truſted them more then God or the Prophets. Men have a world of tricks to undermine their friends, to ruine them, and to deſerve ill of thoſe that would with all their hearts deſerve well of them, when yet in the meane time they can gratifie the enemy, pleaſe them and hold correſpondencie with them, as heere *Ephraim* did. *Ephraim is a ſilly Dove*, &c. This therefore is not that which wee muſt aime at, but to be ſimple and children concerning evill,

Iames 1.8.

evill, but not in ignorance and simplicitie that way.

Againe, *this creature is a faithfull creature*, that is mainely here aimed at; it is faithfull to the mate, So the Christian soule by the Spirit of God, it is made faithfull to Christ, it keepes the judgement chast, is not tainted with errors and sinnes, hee keepes his affections chast likewise, sets nothing in his heart above Christ, *whom hath hee in Heaven but him, and what is there in Earth hee desires beside him.* You know in the *Revelation*, the *Spouse of Christ* is brought in like a *Virgin contracted*, but the *Romish Church* like a *whore.* Therefore the Church of God must take heed of the *Roman Church*, for that is not a *Dove*, wee must be *Virgins*, who must keepe chast soules to Christ, as you have it *Reve.*14.4. *Those that follow the Lamb, whereseever hee goeth, they have not defiled themselves with woemen*, the meaning is spirituall, namely that they have not defiled themselves with Idolatry and spirituall fornication: they have chast hearts to Christ. So in this respect they resemble the *Dove*; These therefore that draw away from the love of religion to mixture, to be *meretrices*, and harlots in religion, they are not Christs doves, as farre as they yeeld to this, it is an argument that they have false hearts; Christs Church is a *Dove*, she keepes close and inviolate to him.

3. *Faithfulnesse.*

Psal.73.25.

Rev.14.4.

Againe, *This creature is of a neate disposition*, it will not lodge where it shall bee troubled with

4. *Neatnesse.*

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with ſtench, and annoyed that way, and likewiſe feedes neately on pure graine, not upon carrion, as you ſee in the *Arke*, when the *Raven* was ſent out it lights upon carrion, of which there was then plenty, and therefore never came into the *Arke* againe. But the *Dove*, when ſhe went out would not light upon carrion, or dead things; and ſo finding noe fit food came backe againe to the *Arke*. So the Chriſtian ſoule in this reſpect is like a *Dove*, that will not feed upon worldly carrion, or ſinnefull pleaſures, but upon Chriſt and ſpirituall things. The ſoule of a carnall, and a naturall man uſeth to feed upon duſt, earth and earthly things, when the ſoule of a true Chriſtian, that hath the taſte of Grace, feedes *neatly*, it will not feed on that which is baſe and earthly, but upon heavenly and ſpirituall things.

Gen. 8. 7.

Simile.

5. It is *Gregaria avis*, a bird that loves communion and fellowſhip, as the Prophet ſpeakes, *Who are thoſe that flocke to the windowes as Doves*, for ſo they uſe to flocke to their houſes by companies. So the children of God love the communion and fellowſhip one of another, and keep ſevered from the world, as ſoone as ever they are ſeperated from it; delighting in all thoſe of the ſame nature. *Doves* will conſort with *Doves*, Chriſtians with Chriſtians and none elſe, they can reliſh no other company, theſe and ſuch like properties may profitably bee conſidered of the *Dove*. The much ſtanding upon theſe were to wrong the intendment of the

Isa. 60. 8.

Spirit

Spirit of God; to neglect them altogether, were as much. Therefore wee have touched upon ſome properties onely.

Now *For the ſufferings of the Church* it is like a *Dove* in this. *The Dove is moleſted by all the Birds of prey*, it being the common prey of all other ravenous birds. So the poore Church of God is perſecuted and moleſted, *Oh that I had wings like a Dove*, &c (ſaith holy *David*) It is an old ſpeech, and is for ever true, *That Crowes and ſuch eſcape better then Doves*. The puniſhment that ſhould light on *Ravens* oft times it lights on *Doves*, thus Gods *Dove*, Gods *Church* is uſed. 2.

But, *What defence hath Gods poore Church?* why no defence. But

Firſt, *flight*, even as the Dove hath nothing but flight, it hath no tallents to wound, but it hath flight, ſo we are to fly to God as to our mountaine, fly to the *Arke* that God may take us in. The *Church* of God hath no other refuge but to be houſed in God and Chriſt, he is our *Arke*. Prov. 18. 10.

Secondly, and to mourne as *Hezekiah* ſaith of himſelfe. *Iſay.* 38. *Hee mourned as a Dove, and chatter'd like a Crane.* The ſtate of the *Church* of God is like the *Turtles*, to mourne in all afflictions, deſertions, and moleſtations of wicked men, to mourne to God who heares the bemonings of his owne Spirit in them: and woe to all other birds, the birds of prey, when the *Turtles* doe mourne (becauſe of their cruelty) it is a preſage

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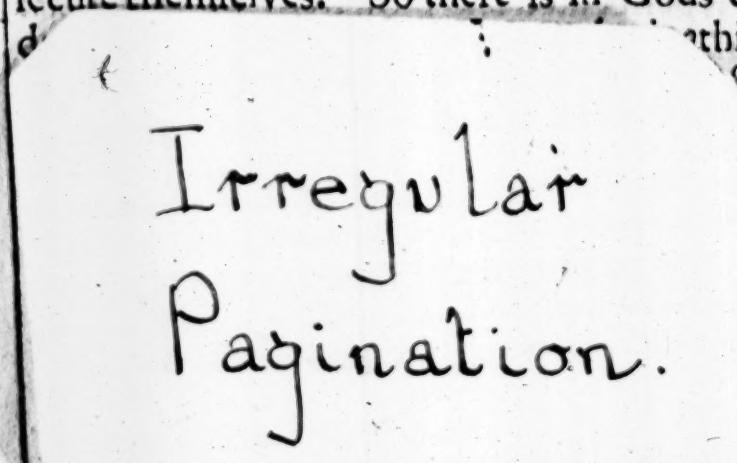
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sage of ruine to them, when they force the *Turtle* to sorrow, and mourning.

3. And then Thirdly, they have another refuge besides *flight* and mourning, which is *to build high from vermine* that would otherwise molest them. Instinct teacheth them thus to escape their enemies by building high, and so to secure themselves. So there is in Gods chil-



Object.

Psal. 74. 19.

he would esteeme more of it then hee doth, and not suffer it to bee persecuted thus?

God never forsakes his *Dove*, but is an *Arke* for it to fly to, a *Rocke* for it to build on, The *Dove* hath alwayes a refuge in God and in Christ in the worst times; You have a notable place for this. *Psal.* 68. 13. *Though you have lyen among the pots* (that is) smeared, and sullied; *yet they shall bee as the wings of a Dove covered with silver and her feathers with yellow gold, when the almighty scattered Kings in it, it was white as the snow in Salmon.* So though the *Church* of God

God lies among the pots a while all ſmeared, and ſoiled, and ſullied with the ill uſage of the world, yet as long as it keepes it ſelfe a *Dove*, unſpotted of the filth of the world and ſinne, though it bee ſmeared with the ill uſage thereof, we ſee what God promiſeth heere; *Yet ſhall they bee as the wings of a Dove covered with ſilver and her feathers with yellow gold.* So God will bring forth his *Dove* with glory out of all theſe abaſements at length. So much for the title of *Dove*. It followes

My Vndefiled.

Vndefiled is a high word to be applied to the *Church* of God here, for the Church groning under infirmities to be counted perfect and undefiled: but Chriſt who judgeth aright of his *Church*, and knowes beſt what ſhe is; Hee yet thus judgeth of her. But, *How is that? The Church is Vndefiled* (eſpecially) *in that it is the ſpouſe of Chriſt and cloathed with the robes of his Righteouſneſſe.* For there is an exchange ſo ſoone as ever we are united to Chriſt, our ſinnes are upon him, and his Righteouſneſſe is made ours; and therefore in Chriſt the Church is undefiled. Chriſt himſelfe the ſecond Perſon is the firſt lovely thing next the Father, and in Chriſt all things as they have relation to Him are loved, as they are in Him. Chriſts humane Nature is next loved to the ſecond Perſon, it is Vnited, and is firſt pure, holy, and beloved, Then becauſe the Church is Chriſt miſticall, it is neere to him (and in a manner) as neere

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Object. But you will object, If the Church of God bee his Dove, why is it ſo with it as it is, that God ſhould ſuffer his love and his Dove, and his turtle thus (*as it were*) to bee preyed upon.

Pſal. 74. 19. *Give not the ſoule of the Turtle to the beaſts* (ſaith the Pſalmiſt) If the Church were Gods Dove he would eſteeme more of it then hee doth, and not ſuffer it to bee perſecuted thus?

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as that ſacred Body of his, both making up one Chriſt myſticall, And ſo is amiable, and beloved even of God himſelfe, who hath pure eyes: yet in this reſpect lookes upon the Church as *Vndefiled.*

Chriſt and his Church are not to be conſidered as two, when we ſpeake of this undefiledneſſe, but as one. And the Church having Chriſt with all that is Chriſts, they have the field, and the pearle in the field together, and Chriſt giving himſelfe to the Church, he gives his Righteouſneſſe, his perfection, and holines, all is the Churches.

But how can it be the Churches, when it is not in the Church, but in Chriſt?

It is ſafe for the *Church* that it is in Chriſt who is perfect, and *Vndefiled*; for us to make us appeare ſo: and ſo it is in *Chriſt* the ſecond *Adam* for our good: it is not in him as another perſon; but it is in him, as the Churches Head, that make both one Chriſt. The hand and the foot ſee not; but both hand and foot have benefit by the eye that ſees for them. There is no member of the body underſtands, but the head does all for them. Put the caſe we have not abſolute Righteouſneſſe, and undefiledneſſe in our owne Natures and perſons inheering in us. Yet we have it in Chriſt that is one with us, who hath it for our good. It is ours; For all the comfort, and good that we may have by it, and thereupon, *The Church in Chriſt is undefiled:* yea even then when it feeles its own defilements.

And

And here ariſeth that wondrous contradiction that is found in a beleevers apprehenſion. The nature of faith is to apprehend *Righteouſneſſe*, in the ſence of ſinne, *Happineſſe*, in the ſence of miſery, and favour in the ſence of diſpleaſure

And the ground of it is; Becauſe that at the ſame time, the ſoule may be in ſome meaſure defiled in it ſelfe, and yet notwithſtanding be undefiled in her head and husband Chriſt. Hence the guilty ſoule, when it feeles corruption and ſinne, yet notwithſtanding doth ſee it ſelfe holy, and cleane in Chriſt the head, and ſo at once there is a conſcience of ſinne, and no more conſcience of ſinne, as the Apoſtle ſaith, *Heb.*10.2. when we believe in Chriſt, and *are purged* with his bloud, that is, there is no more guilt of ſin binding over to eternall damnation, yet notwithſtanding alwayes there is a conſcience of ſinne, for we are guilty of infirmities, *And if we ſay we have no ſinne we lie and deceive our ſelves.* 1 Joh.1.10.

But, *How can this be that there ſhould be conſcience of ſinne, and no conſcience of ſinne, a ſinner, and yet a perfect Saint and undefiled?* *Object.*

The Conſcience knowes its owne imperfection, ſo it is defiled, and accuſeth of ſinne: And as it lookes to Chriſt ſo it ſees it ſelfe pure, and purged from all ſinne; Here is the conqueſt, fight, and the victory of *Faith* in the deepeſt ſence of ſinne, pollution and defilement in our ſelves; at the ſame time to ſee an abſolute, and perfect Righteouſneſſe in *Ieſus Chriſt*. Herein *Anſw.*1.

is

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is even the triumph of *Faith* whereby it anſwers God. And Chriſt who ſees our imperfections, (but it is to purge and cleanſe them away, not to damne us for them;) at the ſame time hee ſees us in his owne love, cloathed with his Righteouſneſſe, as one with himſelfe indowed with whatſoever he hath, his ſatisfaction and obedience being ours, as verily as any thing in the world is. Thus hee lookes on us, and thus faith lookes upon him too, and together with the ſight, and ſenſe of ſinne, at the ſame time, it apprehends Righteouſneſſe, perfect Righteouſneſſe, and ſo is undefiled. This is the maine point in Religion, and the comfort of Chriſtians to ſee their perfection in *Chriſt Ieſus*, And to be *loſt* in themſelves (as it were) and to be onely *found in him, not having their owne Righteouſneſſe, but the Righteouſneſſe of God in him.* This is a miſtery which none knowes but a beleeving ſoule; none ſee corruption more, none ſee themſelves freed more, they have an inward ſight to ſee corruption, and an inward faith to ſee God takes not advantage at it. And ſurely there can be no greater honour to Chriſt then this, In the ſence of ſin, of wants, imperfections, ſtaines, and blemiſhes, yet to wrap our ſelves in the righteouſneſſe of Chriſt God-man, and by faith beeing thus covered with that abſolute Righteouſneſſe of Chriſt, with boldneſſe to goe cloathed in the garments of this our elder Brother, to the throne of grace, This is an honour to Chriſt, to attribute ſo much

Phil. 3. 9.

to

to his Righteouſneſſe, That being cloathed therewith, we can boldly breake through the fire of Gods juſtice, and all thoſe terrible attributes, when we ſee them all (as it were) ſatisfied fully in Chriſt. For Chriſt with his righteouſneſſe could goe through the juſtice of God, having ſatisfied it to the full for us. And we being cloathed with this his Righteouſneſſe and ſatisfaction may goe through too.

But beſides that there is another undefilednes in the Church, in reſpect to which ſhe is called *undefiled*, that is, *in purity of diſpoſition*, tending to perfection. And God reſpects her according to her better part, and according to what hee will bring her in due time. For we are choſen unto perfection, and to be holy in his ſight, and perfectly holy, undefiled and pure, we are not choſen to weake beginnings. 2.

In chooſing us, what did God ayme at? Did hee ayme at theſe imperfect beginnings to reſt there? No, we were elected and choſen to perfection; For as it is in this naturall life, God purpoſed that we ſhould not onely have all the limbes of men, but grow from infancie to activeneſſe and perfection; As God at firſt intended ſo much for our bodies, no queſtion hee intends as much alſo for the ſoule, that we ſhould not onely have the lineaments of Chriſtianity, a ſanctified judgement with affections in part renewed; But hee hath choſen us to perfection by degrees. As the ſeed firſt lyes rotting in the ground, then growes to a ſtalke, and then

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then to an eare; So Gods wiſedome ſhines here by bringing things by degrees to perfection, and undefiledneſſe. His Wiſedome will have it thus, or elſe his Power might have it otherwaies, becauſe he will have us to live by *Faith*, to truſt his mercy in Chriſt, and not to the undefiledneſſe that is begunne in us, but to admire that which wee have in Chriſt himſelfe.

And indeed it is the character of a judicious beleeving Chriſtian ſoule, that he can ſet a price, and value the Righteouſneſſe of Chriſt out of himſelfe, labouring, living and dying to appeare in that, and yet to comfort and ſuſtaine himſelfe during this Conflict and fight betweene the fleſh and the Spirit, that in time this inherent *Grace* ſhall be brought to perfection.

And Chriſt hee lookes upon us as he meanes to perfect the worke of Grace in us by little and little, as he meanes to purge and cleanſe us, as *Epheſ.*5.26,27. The end of Redemption is, that he might purge his Church, and ſo never leave it, till he have made it *a glorious Spouſe in Heaven*. He lookes upon us, as we ſhall be ere long, and therefore we are ſaid, *To be dead to ſinne* while we are but dying to it. And (ſaith he) Gal.5.24. *You have crucified the fleſh with the affections, and luſts thereof*, when we are but crucifying it; but it is ſaid ſo, Becauſe it is as ſure to be done, as if it were done already. As a man, when he is condemned, and going to his execution, he is a dead man; So there is a ſentence paſſed upon

ſinne

ſinne and corruption, it ſhall be aboliſhed and die. Therefore it is dead in ſentence, and is dying in execution. It is done, *They that are in Chriſt have crucified the fleſh with the lusts thereof.* Gal. 5. 24. It is as ſure to faith as if it were done already. So wee are ſaid *to ſit in heavenly places with Chriſt*, Eph. 2. 6. wee are with him already. For Chriſt having taken us ſo neere in affection to himſelfe, he will never leave us, till he have made us ſuch, as hee may have full contentment in, which is in Heaven; when the contract betweene him and us ſhall be fulfilled in conſummation of the marriage. Thus faith lookes, and Chriſt lookes thus upon us. Which ſhould comfort us in weakeneſſe, that God regards us not in our preſent imperfections, but as he meanes to make us ere long. In the meane time that hee may looke upon us in love, he lookes upon us in the obedience of his ſonne, in whom whatſoever is good ſhall be perfected at the laſt.

What ſhould wee doe then, if Chriſt doth make his Church thus, *his Love, his Dove, his Vndefiled*, by making his love to meete in it as the center thereof, whereunto hee doth confine all his love (as it were) wee ſhould confine our love to him againe, and have no love out of Chriſt, ſince hee hath no love out of us: There ſhould bee an everlaſting mutuall ſhining, and reflection betweene him and the ſoule. Wee ſhould laie open our ſoules to his love; (as indeed hee deſires eſpecially the communion of our affections,) wee ſhould reflect love to him againe. *Vſe.* 1.

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againe. This perpetuall everlasting entercourse betweene Christ and his Spouse, is her maine happinesse heere, and her eternall happinesse in heaven; In looking on him who hath done so much for us, hee shines on us, and wee looke backe againe upon him. Doth Christ love us so intimately, and so invincibly, that no indignities nor sinne could overcome his love, which made, that hee endured that which hee hates most, *to become sinne for us*, nay the want of that, which was more to him, then all the world, the want of the sence of the favour of God for a time, *My God my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Hath Christ thus infinitly loved us, and shall not wee backe againe make him our love? In their degree the Saints of God have all done so. It was a good speech of *Ignatius* the *Martyr*, *My love Christ was crucified.* So a Christian should say, *My love was crucified, my love dyed, my love is in heaven*; And for the things on earth I love them, as they have a beame of him in them, as they leade mee to him: But he is my love, there my love is pitched, even upon him, this is the ground of these Scripture phrases, *But our conversation is in heaven from whence wee looke for the Saviour, the Lord Iesus Christ*, &c. and *set your affections on the things that are above.* Why? Christ our love is there, *the soule is more where it loves, then where its residence is.* It dies (as it were) to other things, and lives in the thing it loves, therefore our thoughts and affections, our joy and delight should

1 Cor. 5. 21.

Phil. 3. 20.

Col. 3. 1.

ſhould bee drawne up to Chriſt, for indeed his love hath ſuch a magneticall attractive force, that where it is, it will draw up the heavie iron, the groſſe ſoule, and make it heavenly, for there is a binding, a drawing force in this excellent affection of love.

My love, my Dove, &c.

There are all words of ſweetneſſe, he labours to expreſſe all the affection hee can, for the conſcience is ſubject to upbraid, and to claimour much, ſo that there muſt bee a great deale of perſwaſion to ſtill the accuſing conſcience of a ſinner, to ſet it downe, make it quiet, and perſwade it of Gods love. Therefore hee uſeth all heavenly Rhetoricke to perſwade and move the affections. *Vſe.2.*

In this that the Church is undefiled in Chriſt, Let us learne when afflicted in conſcience not ſo much to judge of our ſelves by what we feele in our ſelves as by what faith ſuggeſts. In Chriſt therefore let us judge of our ſelves by what wee are as in him. Wee are *poore* in our ſelves, but have *riches* in him: wee *die* in our ſelves in regard of this life, but wee have a *life* in him, an *eternall life*, and wee are *ſinners* in our ſelves, but wee have a *Righteouſneſſe* in him whereby wee are righteous in his ſight. Wee are *fooliſh*, *unſkillfull*, *and ignorant* in our ſelves, but hee is our *wiſdom* in all whatſoever is amiſſe in us. Let us labour to ſee a full ſupplie of our wants made up in Chriſt, this is to glorifie God as much as if wee could fulfill the law perfectly. If wee *Vſe.3.* 1 Cor.5.20.

were

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were as *undefiled* as *Adam* was, wee could not glorifie God more, then when wee finde our ſelves, and our conſcience guiltie of ſinnes, yet thus by the Spirit of God to go out of our ſelves, and to ſee our ſelves in Chriſt, and thus to caſt our ſelves on him, imbrace him, and take that guift *of God* given us, *Chriſt* offered to us, becauſe God ſo commands, wee honour God more, then if wee had the obedience that *Adam* had at firſt before his fall. For now in the covenant of Grace, hee will bee glorified in his mercy, in his forgiving, forbearing, rich tranſcendent mercy, and in going beyond all our unworthineſſe and ſinnes, by ſhewing that there is a *Righteouſneſſe* provided for us, the *Righteouſneſſe* of *God man*, whoſe obedience and ſatisfaction, is more then our diſobedience, becauſe it is the *diſobedience* of man onely, but his *Obedience* and *Righteouſneſſe* is the *Obedience*, and *Righteouſneſſe of God-man*, ſo it ſatisfieth divine juſtice, and therefore ought to ſatisfie Conſcience to the full, our faith muſt anſwer Chriſts carriage to us, we muſt therefore account our ſelves in him *undefiled*, becauſe he accounts us ſo, not in our ſelves, but as we have a beeing in him, we are *undefiled*.

Ioh. 4. 10.

Againe ſee here Chriſt accounts us (even in regard of habituall grace) *undefiled*, though we have for the preſent many corruptions. Let us therefore learne a leſſon of moderation of ſo excellent a teacher; let us not be aſhamed to learne of our Saviour. What ſpirit ſhall wee thinke

thinke they have, that will unchurch Churches, becauſe they have ſome defilement and unbrotherly bretheren, accounting them no *Churches*, no *Bretheren*, becauſe they have ſome imperfections. Why hath not Chriſt a quarrell to the Church then? is hee blind? doth his love make him blind? No, hee ſeeth corruption, but hee ſeeth better things, ſomewhat of his owne that makes him overlooke thoſe imperfections, becauſe they are ſuch as hee meanes to mortifie, ſubdue, weare away, and to fire out by the power of his Spirit, which as fire ſhall waſt all thoſe corruptions in time. So it is with the *Church*; put the caſe, ſhe hath ſome corruptions, that it be not with her, as it ſhould be, yet ſhee is a *Church* notwithſtanding. The *Church* of *Corinth* (we ſee) *Paul* ſtiles them *Saints*, and *Bretheren* with all thoſe ſweet names, notwithſtanding they had many corruptions among them. 1 Cor. 1.

Vſe. 5. Wee have a company of malignant ſpirits worſe then theſe a great deale, Atheiſticall perſons that have no Religion at all, who out of malice and envie watch for the halting of good Chriſtians, who can ſee nothing but defilement in thoſe that have any good in them, nothing but hypocriſie, mopiſhneſſe, all that is naught, who if they can deviſe any blemiſh, put it upon them, whereas Chriſt ſees a great deale of ill in the *Church*, but he ſees it to pardon, ſubdue, and to pitty the Church for it, extolling and magnifying its goodneſſe. What ſpirits

Serm. VII. are those of, that watch to see imperfections in others, (that their hearts tell them are better then they,) that they may onely disgrace them by it: for goodnesse they will see none.

Vse. 6. And likewise, It should teach us not to wrong our selves with false judgement. Wee should have a double eye, one eye to see that which is amisse in us, our owne imperfections, thereby to carry our selves in a perpetuall humility: but an other eye of Faith, to see what we have in Christ, our perfection in him, so to account of our selves, and glory in this our best beeing, that in him wee have a glorious beeing, such an one whereby God esteemes us perfect, and undefiled in him onely. The one of which sights, should inforce us to the other, which is one end, why God in this world leaves corruption in his children. Oh, since I am thus undefiled shall I rest in my selfe? Is there any harbour for me to rest in mine owne Righteousnesse? O no, it drives a man out of all harbour; Nay, I will rest in that Righteousnesse, which God hath wrought by Christ, who is God-Man, That will indure the sight of God, beeing cloathed with which, I can indure the presence of God. So, this sight of our owne unworthinesse, and wants, should not be a ground of discouragement, but a ground to drive us perfectly out of our selves, that by faith we might renew our title to that Righteousnesse, wherein is our especiall glory, Why should we not judge of our selves as Christ doth? Can we see more in

in our ſelves, then hee doth; yet notwithſtanding all he ſees, hee accounts us as *Vndefiled.* Serm. VII.

Againe, ſince hee accounts us *undefiled*, becauſe hee meanes to make us ſo, and now lookes on us, as we ſhall be; In all our foyles, and infirmities, let us comfort our ſelves, it ſhall not thus be alwayes with us. O, this fleſh of mine ſhall fall and fall ſtill, and ſhall decay as *Sauls* houſe, and the Spirit at the laſt ſhall conquer in all this. I am not choſen to this beginning, to this conflicting courſe of life. I am choſen to triumph, to perfection of Grace, this is my comfort. Thus we ſhould comfort our ſelves, and ſet upon our enemies, and conflict in this hope of victory, I ſhall get the better of my ſelfe at the laſt. Imperfection ſhould not diſcourage, but comfort us in this world; wee are choſen to perfection; Let us ſtill rejoyce in that *we are choſen to Sanctification*, which is a little begunne, being an earneſt of other bleſſings; let us not reſt in the pledge or in the earneſt, but labour for a further pledge of more ſtrength, and grace; For thoſe that have the Spirit of Chriſt, will ſtrive to be as much unſpotted, and as heavenly as they can; To fit themſelves for that heavenly Condition as much as may bee; when, becauſe they cannot be in heaven, yet they will converſe there, as much as they can; and becauſe they cannot be with ſuch company altogether, they will be as much as may be, labouring as they are able to *Vſe.* 7.

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be that which they ſhall be hereafter. Imperfection contents them not; and therefore they pray ſtill in the Lords prayer, *Thy kingdome come.* While there is any imperfection, their hearts are inlarged more and more, nothing contents them but perfection. And indeed God accounts us thus unſpotted for this end, becauſe hee would incourage us, Where hee ſees the will and indeavour hee gives the title of the thing defired.

Verſe. 3. *I have put of my coate, how ſhall I put it on? I have waſhed my feete, how ſhall I defile them?*

Here is an ingenious confeſſion made by the Church of her owne untowardneſſe, notwithſtanding all Chriſts heavenly Rhetorick and perſwaſion that hee did uſe; yet ſhee drawes backe, and ſeemes to have reaſon ſo to doe. *I have put of my coate, how ſhall I put it on againe* to let thee in, *I have waſhed my feete*, &c. It is a phraſe taken from the cuſtome of thoſe hot countries, wherein they uſed to waſh their feete. *I have waſhed my feete, how ſhall I defile them* to riſe and open the doore to thee? There is a ſpirituall meaning herein, as if ſhee had ſaid, I have ſome eaſe by this ſleepie profeſſion, ſome freedome from evill tongues, and ſome exemption, and immunity from ſome troubles I was in before. I was then perhaps too indiſcreete, now wilt thou call me againe to thoſe troubles, that I have wiſely avoyded? No, *I have put of*

my

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my coate, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feete, how shall I defile them? I affect this estate very well; I am content to be as I am without further troubling of my selfe; Thus the Church puts of Christ. This I take to be the meaning of the words, That which is observiable is this: *Observ.* 1. That it is not an easie matter to bring the soule & Christ together into neere fellowship. We see here how the Church drawes back, for, the flesh moves either not to yeeld at all to duty, or to be cold, uncertaine, and unsetled therein. The flesh knowes that a neere communion with Christ cannot stand with favouring any corruption, & therfore the flesh will doe something, but not enough, it wil yeeld to something, but not to that that it should doe, to that communion and fellowship that we ought to have with Christ. To instance in some particulars, as a rule and measure to somewhat of which we should be.

A Christian life should be nothing but a communion, and entercourse with Christ. A walking in the Spirit; and to be spirituall, and to savour the things of the Spirit altogether, hee should studie to adorne his profession by a lively and cheerefull performance of dutie: And Mat. 5. 16. be exemplarie to others; and should be in such a frame, as he should *walke continually in the comforts of the Holy Ghost* undismayed, and undaunted, *And abound in the fruits of the Spirit*, Act. 9. 39. and doe all the good he can whereseoever hee comes, Hee should *keepe himselfe unspotted of the world*, goe against the streame, and be con- Jam. 1. 27.

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tinually in ſuch a temper, as it ſhould be the joy of his heart to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt. One might go on thus in a world of particulars, which would be too long. If we could attaine to this excellency, it were an happy life, a Heaven upon Earth, this wee ſhould ayme at. Will the fleſh indure this, thinke you? No, it will not; Which you ſhall ſee more particularly in this next Obſervation, which is,

2 Tim. 4. 8.

Obſer. 2. That *one way, whereby the unregenerate part in us hinders this communion with Chriſt*, and the ſhining of a beleever in a chriſtian courſe, *Is by falſe pretences, reaſons and excuſes. I have waſhed my feete, I have put of my coate*, &c.

The fleſh never wants excuſes and pretences (there was never any yet came to hell, but they had ſome ſeeming pretence for their comming thither) to ſhift and ſhuffle off duties, there was never yet any careleſſe ſinnefull courſe but it had the fleſh to juſtifie it with one reaſon or other; and therefore it is good to underſtand the Sophyſticall ſhifts of the fleſh, and pretences and ſhewes which it hath, and as it is good to know the truth of God, and of Chriſt revealed in his word, ſo is it to know the falſeneſſe and deceitfulneſſe of our owne hearts, they are both myſteries almoſt alike, hard to be knowne. Labour wee then more and more to know the falſehood of our owne diſpoſition, and to know the truth of God, To give inſtance in a few particulars. You ſee in the Church the difficulty of her communion with Chriſt comes

from

from the idle pretences and excuses she hath. Every one hath his severall pretexts, as his state and condition is. Wee thinke wee should be loosers, if wee give our selves to that degree of goodnesse which others doe, whereas God doth curse those blessings which men get with neglect of duty to him. If wee seeke first the Kingdome of Heaven, all other things that are good for us, shall be cast upon us.

Thou shalt loose the favour of such a one? *Object.*

Never care for that favour thou canst not keepe with Gods favour, *the favour of man is a snare*, take heed of that favour that snares thee, thou looseſt their favour and company, but thou gaineſt the favour of Christ, and company of Angells. *Answ.*

But they will raile on thee and reproach thee with thy old sinnes? *Object.*

Care not, *God will doe thee good for that*, as *David* said, when *Shemai* cursed him. *Answ.*

But I shall loose my pleasure? *Object.*

O but such pleasures end in death: they are but pleasures of sinne for a season, and thou shalt not loose by the change, *the wayes of wisdome are pleasant wayes*, one day religiously spent in keeping of a good conscience, what a sweet farewell hath it? *Joy is in the habitation of the Righteous. It becomes the Righteous to be joyfull.* How ever outwardly it seemes yet there is a Paradise within. Many such objections the flesh makes, some take scandall at the prosperity of the wicked, and affliction of the Saints, *Answ.*

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and from hence take occasion to rot in their dreggs of sin, but what saith Christ, *Happy is the man who is not offended in me.* As for the prosperity of the wicked, envy them not, they stand in slippery places, and flourish like a greene bay tree, but presently they vanish. Take no offence at them nor at the crosse, looke not at this, but at the ensuing comfort. *Blessed are they that suffer for Righteousnesse sake*, binde such words to your heard as your crowne, God reserves the best comforts to the worst times, his people never find it otherwise.

Mat. 11. 6.

Mat. 5. 10.

Object. I but if I be thus precise, the times are so bad, I shall be alone.

Answ. Complaine not of the times when thou makest them worse, thou shouldest make the times better, the worse the times are, the better be thou, for this is thy glory to be good in an evill generation. This was *Lots* glory. *Paul* tells what ill times they were, But saith hee, *Our conversation is in Heaven, from whence wee looke for a Saviour:* What brings destruction on Gods people, but their joyning with the wicked. When they joyned with the children of men, then came the flood, these and the like pretences, keepe men altogether from goodnesse, or else from such a measure, as may bring honour to God and comfort to themselves.

Phil. 3 20.

Or if men be great, why this is not honourable to do thus, as you know what *Michall* said *to David, How glorious was the King of Israell this day? like a foole,* &c. To attend upon the

word

word of God with reverence, to make conſcience of Religion, O it ſtands not with greatneſſe *&c.* But the Spirit of God anſwereth this in him, *I will yet be more vile for God.* It is a mans honour heere to ſtand for God, and for good things, and it is our honour, that God will honour us ſo much.

2. *The excuſes of worldlings.* 1 Tim. 4. 8.

Thoſe likewiſe that are *worldly* have excuſes alſo; *alas I muſt tend my calling*, and they have Scripture for it to. *Hee that provides not for his family is worſe then an Infidell*, as if God had ſet up any callings to hinder the calling of Chriſtianity, as if that were not the greateſt calling, and the beſt part that will abide with us forever, as if it were not the part of a Chriſtian to redeeme time from his calling to the duties of Chriſtianity. I have no time (ſaith the worldling) what will you have mee to do? why what time had *David* when hee meditated on the Law of God day and night? hee was a King, the King is bound to ſtudy the Scriptures. And yet whoſe imployment is greater, then the imploiment of the cheife Magiſtrate?

Luk. 10. 42.

Pſal. 1. 2.

Deut. 17. 18, 19.

And thus every one as their ſtate and condition is, they have ſeverall pretences and excuſes. Thoſe that are young, their excuſe is, we have time enough for theſe things hereafter. Others as thoſe that were negligent to build the ſecond Temple, *The time is not yet ſay they*; when as the uncertainty of this life of ours, the weightineſſe of the buſineſſe, the danger of the cuſtome of ſinne, the ingaging of our hearts deeper and

Hag. 1. 2.

deeper

deeper into the world, makes it a more difficult thing to be a Chriſtian. It more and more darkens our underſtanding the more we ſinne, and the more it eſtrangeth our affections from good things the more wee have run out in an evill courſe. Time is a ſpeciall mercy, but then thou haſt not time onely but the meanes, good company, and good motions, thou mayeſt never have ſuch a gale againe, thy heart may be heardned through the deceitfulneſſe of ſinne. Againe, who would want the comforts of Religion for the preſent, (as *Auſtin* ſaith) *I have wanted thy ſweeteneſſe too long.* What folly is it to want the ſweeteneſſe and comfort of Religion ſo long as we may have it.

Some others pretend, *The uncomfortableneſſe of Religion, I ſhall want my comforts*, when as indeed, there is no ſound comfort without having our hearts in a perfect communion with Chriſt, walking with God, and breaking of from our evill courſes. What is the reaſon of diſcomforts, unreſolvedneſſe, and unſetledneſſe? when we know not where we are, whether we goe, or what our condition is, unſetledneſſe breedes diſcomfort, and indeed there is no pleaſure ſo much, as the pleaſure that the ſerving of God hath with it. As the fire hath light and heate alwayes in it, ſo there is no holy action that we performe throughly, but as it hath an increaſe of ſtrength, ſo there is an increaſe of comfort and joy annexed to it. There is a preſent reward annexed to all things that are ſpiritually

good

good: they carry with them present peace and joy, the conscience hath that present comfort, which consumes all discouragements whatsoever, as is alwayes found in the experience of that soule, that hath wonne so much of it selfe, as to breake through discouragements to the practise of holy duties. Beleevers have a joy and comfort, *that others know not of:* an hidden kind of *Manna*, and contentment. Rev. 2. 7.

These, and a thousand such like discouragements men frame to themselves. My health will not serve; I shall indanger my life; There is *a Lyon in the way*, (saith the sluggard) who with his excuses *thinks himselfe wiser, then the wisest in the Citty*; There is none so wise as the sluggard; for belly pollicie teacheth him a great many excuses, which he thinks will goe for wisedome; because by them he thinks to sleepe in a whole skinne; Hee is but a sluggard for all that, and though hee plead *Yet a litle while*, *Povertie*, not onely outward, but spirituall poverty, and barrennesse of soule *will come upon him, as an armed man*, and leave him destitute of grace and comfort, when he shall see at the last what an evill course of life hee hath led, that hee hath yeelded so much to his lazy flesh to be drawne away by discouragements from duties, that he was convinced were agreeable to the word. *Now, what may bee the grounds and causes of these false Pretences and Excuses, which hinder us from holy duties.* There be many causes. Prov. 26. 13. Prov. 26. 16.

First,

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Cauſes of our delayes, in putting of Spirituall duties.

1. *Our inclination to earthly things.*

2. *Becauſe our depraved wit naturally aboundeth in ſhifts.*

Eccleſ.7.2.9.

3. *Becauſe of corrupt natures likeneſſe to the Divell.*

Firſt of all, one cauſe of this in us is this, Naturally ſo farre as we are not guided by a better ſpirit then our owne, we are inclined to much to the earthly preſent things of this life, becauſe they are preſent, and pleaſant; and we are nuzled up in them, and whatſoever pulls us from them is unwellcome to us, this is one ground.

Againe, Ioyne with this, that, Naturally ſince the fall, the ſoule of man having loſt wiſdome to guide it to that which is truly good, hath wit enough left to deviſe untoward ſhifts, to excuſe that which is evill. In this fallen eſtate the former abilities to deviſe things throughly good, is turned to a matter of untoward wit joyned with ſhifting. God made man right but he hath ſought out many inventions. *Carnall witt, ſerves carnall will very well: and carnall luſts never want an advocate to plead for them, namely carnall reaſon.* From the bent therefore of the ſoule to ill things, *Pleaſure*, *Eaſe*, and *Honour*, (ſuch a condition as pleaſeth the outward man ſince the fall) the bent and weight of the ſoule goeth this way, together with wit: having loſt the Image of God in holy wiſdome, there is ſhifting. This is a ground alſo why delayes are joyned with ſhifts.

Againe, there is another ground, that *Corrupt Nature* (in this like the Divell and ſinne) which never appeare in their owne colours, ſets a man on this way. Who would not hate the divell if he ſhould appeare in his owne likeneſſe? or ſinne if it ſhould appeare in his owne colours?

colours? and therefore wit ſtretcheth it ſelfe to finde out ſhifts. For ſayes the heart, unleſſe there be ſome ſhifts and pretences to cover my ſhame, I ſhall be knowne to bee what I am indeed, which I would be loath were done: I would have the ſweet, but not the ſhame of ſinne, the credit of Religion, but not put my ſelfe to the coſt which commeth with true Religion, to deny my ſelfe. *Corrupt courſes never appeare in their owne colours,* they are like the Divell for this.

4. *Becauſe of our hypocriſie.*

And then againe, Naturally there is a great deale of Hypocriſie in us; wee may doe duties to ſatisfie Conſcience (for ſomewhat muſt be done,) to heare now and then, reade and come to prayer betwixt ſleeping and waking (yawning prayers) when we can doe nothing elſe; ſomewhat muſt be done, conſcience elſe will cry out of us that we are Atheiſts, and ſhall be damned: ſome ſlubbering ſervice muſt be done therefore. Yet notwithſtanding herein is our hypocriſy, that we cannot bring our hearts to do it, as it ſhould be done to purpoſe, for though it be true that there is much imperfection in the beſt actions, the beſt performances, yet this is hypocriſie when men doe not doe it as God may accept it, and as it may yeeld themſelves comfort. The heart drawes backe: duties it will and muſt doe, but yet will not doe them as it ſhall have comfort by them. This is inbred in the heart naturally, conſcience forceth to doe ſomething, though the fleſh and corruption

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corruption pulls backe. This is the disposition of all men, till they have got the victory of their owne Atheisticall hearts.

5. *Because of a false conceit of God and of Christ.*

And then againe, Another ground may bee this, a false conceit of God, and of Christ; that they will take any thing at our hands, because wee love our selves, and thinke that wee doe very well, wee thinke that God is such a one as wee are, as it is *Psal.* 50. 21. *Thou thoughtest that I was like unto thee*, &c. that God will be put off with any thing, and any excuse will serve the turne. You have not a swearer, a filthy careless person, *But hee thinkes God is mercifull, and Christ dyed for sinners: and I was provoked to it*, &c. still hee thinkes to have some excuse for it, and that they will stand good with God. This *Atheisme* is in us naturally; and when wee are palpably to blame in the judgment of others and our selves in our sober witts; yet wee put more ignorance and carelesnesse on God then on our selves. *Tush, God regards it not*, it is the times, I would bee better: it is company whom I must yeeld unto *&c.* They thinke God will accept these things from them.

6. *The scandals we meet withall in the world.*

But one maine ground thereof is, The scandalls that wee meet withall in the world; which (indeed) is a ground, because our owne false hearts are willing to catch at any thing. You see (say they) these men that make profession of Religion what they are (and then the divell will thrust some Hypocrisie into the profession of Religion) and they judge all by one or too (and will

will bee sure to doe it) therein stands their ingenuity, and if they can see any infirmity in them that are incomparably better then themselves, Oh they are safe, heere is warrant enough to dislike Religion and all good courses; because some doe so and so, as if the course of Religion were the worse for that. Thus they wrap themselves in those excuses, as men doe there hands to defend them from pricks. This is the vile poyson of our hearts that will bee naught, and yet notwithstanding will have reason to be so. The speech is, *wickednesse never wanted pretexts:* which as it is true of great wickednesse, much more is it of that which goes in the world for *drowsie luke warme profession*, under which many sincke to Hell, before they are aware. They never want reason and pretexts to cover their sinne, there is a mint and forge of them in the soule, It can coyne them suddenly. Thus wee see our wits doe serve us excellently well, to lay blocks in our owne way to hinder us from Heaven; we are dunces and dull to doe any thing that is spiritually good, whereof we are incapable. But if it be to lay blocks in our owne way to Heaven, to quarrell with God and his Ordinances, with the doctrine of salvation, with the instruments, teachers and those that leade us a better vvay, that our vvit vvill serve for. But to take a course to doe us good another day, to lay up comforts in vvhich vve might end and close up our dayes, there vve are backvvard, and have shift upon shift. This is added

added for the further explication of it: becauſe of the neceſſity of the point. For, except our hearts be diſcovered to us, we ſhall never know what Religion meanes, ſave to know ſo much as may through the winding, turning, ſhifting, and falſhood of our owne Nature, bring us to hell: Wherein we are worſe enemies to our ſelves then the Divell is, who could not hurt us, unleſſe we did betray our ſelves. But hee hath factours in us to deale for him, our owne carnall wit and affection, they hould correſpondencie with him, whence all the miſchiefe that he doth us, is by that intercourſe that our nature hath with Sathan, That is the *Dalilah* which betrayeth all the *Sampſons* (ſound vvorthy Chriſtians in the vvorld) to their ſpirituall enemies. Therefore, vve can never be ſufficiently inſtructed, vvhat a vile nature vve have ſo oppoſite to Religion, as farre as it is ſaving. Corrupt nature doth not oppoſe it ſo farre as it is ſlubbered over, but ſo farre as may bring us to that ſtate vve ſhould be in. vvee have no vvorſe enemies then our ovvne hearts. Therefore let us vvatch over our ſelves continually, and uſe all bleſſed meanes appointed of God whereby vve may eſcape out of this dangerous ſleepie diſpoſition of ſoule, vvhich coſt the Church ſo deare, as wee ſhall heare (God vvilling) hereafter.

7 AP 53(***)

The end of the ſeventh Sermon.

THE

THE EIGHTH SERMON.

Cant. V. III.

I have put of my coate, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?

WEE are now by Gods assistance to speake of the remedies against the lazie distempers we are prone unto in Spirituall things, where we left off the last day.

What course should we take then to come forth from this distempered lasinesse, That wee may attaine a spirituall tast and relish of heavenly *Quest.*

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heavenly things, so as not to loath religious exercises: or delay and put them off with excuses.

Answ. 1. *Resolve, not to consult with flesh and bloud.*

First of all, *Resolve not to consult with flesh and blood in any thing*; For it alwayes counsells us for ease, as *Peter* counselled Christ, *Master pitty thy selfe.* So wee have a nature in us like unto *Peter*, spare, favour, pity thy selfe. Like *Hevah*, and *Iobs* wife, wee have a corrupt nature that is alwayes solliciting from God, and drawing us unto vanity. Take heed of counselling with flesh and blood; for if men were in a citty invironed round about with enemies would they consult with them what they should doe for defence of the citty? were it not a mad part? and is it not a greater madnesse when Christians will consult with flesh and blood what they should do in duties of obedience, which will alwayes put us upon tearmes of ease, the favour of men, content and the like, which if a man yeeld to, hee shall never enter into heaven. Take heede therfore of consulting with our enemy, seeing Sathan hath all the correspondency hee hath by that enemy which wee harbour in our bossome. In which case the hurt hee doth us by his sophistry comes by our selves, wee betray our selves by our carnall reason, whereby Sathan mingleth himselfe with our imaginations and conceits. Let us therefore beware wee listen not to the counsell of flesh and blood, especially when the matter comes to suffering once, for there of all other things flesh and blood doth draw

Iob 2.

draw backe. Every one hath a *Peter* in himselfe, that saith, *Spare thy selfe*; Thou art indiscreet to venture thy selfe upon this and that hazard. But where the judgment is convinced of the goodnesse of the cause, whether it bee *Religion* or *Iustice*, for the first or for the second table that matters not; If the judgment be convinced of the thing; then consult not with flesh and blood whatsoever the suffering be. It is not necessary, that we should live in riches, honours, pleasures and estimation with the world. But it is necessary wee should live honest men, and good Christians. Therefore when flesh and blood objecteth in this kind, consult not with it. First, Because it is an enemy, and therefore is to be suspected and neglected; Secondly, Because it is said, *Flesh and Blood shall not inherit the kingdome of Heaven*. And therefore we should practise that first lesson in Religion, *Heavenly wisdome*; To ayde us wherein, Christ (knowing what an enemy wee are to our selves in the wayes of God) saith, *Let a man deny himselfe, and take up his Crosse and follow mee*, there is no following of Christ, considering that our flesh is so full of cavills and excuses, unlesse we practise that heavenly lesson of Christ, *to denie our selves*, our whole selfe, our wit and reason in the matters of God: our will and affections. Say nay to all the sluggishnesse of the flesh; silence all presently, as soone as ever they discourage thee from holy wayes. Consider whence they come? which is enough: from Gods and our

1 Cor. 15. 50.

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enemie; and the worst enemie wee have that lyeth in our owne bosome. And to inable us the better, marke what *Paul* saith, *Wee are no more debtors to the flesh*, &c. We owe nothing to it; I owe not such obedience, such subjection to the flesh and carnall reason: I have renounced it long since. What am I abnoxious to a man unto whom I owe no service. Wee owe the flesh no service or obedience, what shall we yeeld to that which wee have long since renounced.

Rom. 8.

3. *To be resolute in spirituall undertakings.*

And withall, *In Spirituall courses, let us arme our selves with resolution:* First, conclude *Is it so or not so*, let our judgements be convinced; for, *Resolution* is a disposition arising from the *will* immediately, but it is of the *will, by sound judgement convinced of the goodnesse of the thing*, after which the *will* resolves. Get resolution from soundnesse of conviction, that such things are good, and that they are best for us, and best for us at this time, the sooner the better: that there is an absolute necessitie to have them, and that they are everlastingly good: O these considerations will put us on amaine to obtaine the same. It is our duty, and we shall sinne against *God*, against our *Conscience*, against the *Spirit of God*, and against others (that take like liberty by our examples) If we yeeld to our base lusts and suggestions in this kinde.

A help to Resolution 2 Sam. 23. 16.

And to helpe *Resolution* the more, let us have before our eyes, the examples of Gods worthies, who (like unto *Davids* worthies, who brake

brake through the Hoſt of the *Philiſtims* for water) Have in all ages broken through all diſcouragements, and made a conſcience more to pleaſe God, to hould communion and fellowſhip with Chriſt, then to hold any correſpondencie with the World, Looke to Bleſſed *Paul*, *What doe yee vexing of me and breaking my heart? I am ready not onely to goe to Ieruſalem, but to die for Chriſts ſake.* And looke to *Chriſt*, how hee ſhakes of *Peter*, *Get thee behind mee Satan*, &c. Looke to *Moſes*, how he ſhooke off all the ſolicitations of a Court; *Becauſe hee had an eye to the recompence of the reward.* Looke to *Ioſhua*, *I and mine houſe will ſerve the Lord.* Let others of the world doe what they will: If others will goe to the Divell let them, for my ſelfe, I and my houſe, (thoſe that I have charge of) will ſerve the Lord. This was a noble reſolution which was in good *Nehemiah*, *Shall ſuch a man as I flie?* what ſhall J flie? ſhall I doe this; yeeld to this baſe diſcouragement? ſhall J diſcourage others (like thoſe *ſpies of Canaan*) by mine example? Hence it is that *Heb.* 11. In that notable Chapter, *That little booke of martyrs*, after the catalogue of thoſe worthies ſet downe there, that which we are exhorted and pointed to in the beginning of the next chapter, is unto the practiſe of the like vertues, In imitation having before us, *ſuch a Cloude of witneſſes, wherewith beeing compaſſed*, the exhortation is, *Let us therefore ſhake off every thing that preſſeth downe, and the ſinne that hangeth*

Act. 21. 13.

Mat. 16. 23.

Heb 11. 26.
Ioſh. 24. 15.

Neh. 6. 11.

Heb. 12. 1.

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so fast on, &c. as the *Cloude* was a guide to them to *Canaan* out of *Egypt*; so the *Cloude* of good examples, is as it were a light to goe before us to the *heavenly Canaan*.

In this case above all, let us looke to Christ, *Who is the author and finisher of our Faith.* This will make us breake through discouragements and resolve indeed. What could hinder him? his love is so fiery, that nothing could hinder him to come from Heaven to the Wombe of the Virgin, from thence to the Crosse, and so to the grave, to be abased lower then ever any creature was. His love to us so carried him through all discouragements and disgraces. *Consider him, who endured such speaking against of sinners.* The consideration of Christs love, and example will carry us through all discouragements whatsoever.

Heb. 12.2.

Heb. 12.3.

3. *To have good grounds and sound reasons for all wee doe.*

And further, *Let us be able by sound reasons to justifie the wayes of God, and to answer cavills, to give account of what we doe to our selves and others*, With reasons why wee sanctifie the *Sabboth*, have such Communion with God in Prayer, Neglect the fashions of the world, &c. To have reasons ready from Scripture, is an excellent thing, when we are able to justifie whatsoever we doe by the *Word*, against all the quarrells of our owne hearts and others. When we are led to doe things onely by the example of others, or by respects, then we are oft times put to it on the suddaine by temptations: being not able to justifie what we doe. Let us labour therefore

therefore to doe things upon good grounds, and be able to justifie all the waies of Religion, as they are easily justified, for nothing in this world stands with so much reason, as exactnesse in the waies of God, There is so much Reason for nothing in the world, as to be not onely Christians, but exact Christians, as *Paul* saith to *Agrippa, would to God you were not almost, but altogether as I am, saving these bonds.* To make conscience of all waies and courses, it stands with the most reason of the world, so to justifie Religion by reasons unanswerable, that may set downe corrupt nature, and stop the mouth of the divell himselfe: and herein let us propound sound and strong Questions to our selves often; are those things (that I am mooved to do) good? or are they not? If they be good, why doe I not doe them? If they be bad, why doe I doe them at all? If they be good, why doe I stick at them? how doe I proove them to bee good? have alway ready some Scripture, or reason from thence which is as good. The reasons of the word are most divinely strong, let them be ready against all Objections whatsoever, as against sleight oathes thinke of that of Christ, that we must give an account for all idle words: how much more for Atheisticall oathes: so against grosser sinnes learne reason; a civill man, an Heathen would not doe thus.

Acts 26.29.

To helpe on reason, wee must often propound strong Questions to our selves.

Mat. 12.

So also when the flesh mooveth us to any backwardnesse in religious courses, let us have some Scripture ready, or Reasons deducted from it.

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1. *From the dignity of our Profession.*

2. *Consider, what excuses may be sufficient at the day of judgement.*

it. As, *From the Dignity of our Profession, from the great Hopes we have to be glorious another day.* And reason the matter, how doth this that I am mooved to suite with my Hopes and expectation to come? how furthers it my journey homewards? And consider this likewise; *That no excuse will serve the turne at the day of judgement, but such an one as ariseth from an invincible infirmity, or an unremovable impediment:* such an excuse taken from an invincible infirmity, may then serve the turne. As, when we cannot possibly doe a thing, from impediments that all the meanes in the world cannot remoove. As a poore man cannot be liberall, *&c.* Excuses also *fetcht from impossible impediments,* as from invincible weakenesse may availe, if a man have an infirme body, that he cannot doe that which another man can: these excuses, with a gratious God will serve the turne; which are not so much excuses, as a just plea. But otherwise, our untoward excuses will not serve the turne. What hindered them in the Gospell who were invited to the Supper? Excuses from *Oxen, Wives,* &c. Was it not lawfull to buy Oxen? and was it not lawfull for the married to take content in a wife? *another had married a wife*; were not all these things lawfull? very lawfull; The *Farme* hurts not, if it hinder not, nor the *Wife, Oxen* nor any thing: but in this case when we regard these things more then the invitation to come to the feast of holy things, heere is the malice of the divel, which brings that dolefull message; *They*

Luke 14.

shall

shal never taste of my feast. There is such an infinite disproportion, betweene the good of Religion, Peace of Conscience, Ioy in the Holy Ghost here, and Heaven and Happinesse hereafter; and betweene any thing in this world, that to alleadge any hinderance wherby we cannot keep a good conscience, and preserve assurance of salvation, is most extreame folly & Atheisme. I beleeve not a better life (the disproportiõ being so great betweene the state of this life and a better) if I fetch excuses from the things of this life, to keepe me from Religion, the Feare of God, and working out my salvation with feare and trembling. These excuses will not serve the turne, not onely with God at the day of judgement: but also our owne consciences will tell us, that we are Hypocrites to make such or such a plea. Therefore when men become false, thereby to provide for wife or children, and take corrupt courses to keepe them from Religion, with pretext of their callings (least they should loose one day in heaven) this imployment cannot prosper, which sleights over duties under false pretences. O! they can toile for the pelfe of the world, but for matters of their soules, they turne off all shamefully, as if there were not a *God* to judge them, a *Heaven* to reward them, or a *Hell* to punish them. Will such excuses serve the turne? O no, they cannot with conscience, much lesse with God the Judge who is greater then our conscience. This is another way to cut off these idle cavills, to consider that these excuses cannot serve

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serve the turne, neither to comfort conscience in this world, nor to uphold us in our plea at the day of judgement, Remember that.

4. *To inure our selves to beare the yoake of Religion.*

And then againe, *Let us inure our selves to beare the yoake of Religion from our youth*, which will make it easie afterwards. It were an excellent thing if those who are young (in the prime of their yeares) would inure themselves to the exercise of Religion, this would make it easie unto them; to reade the Word of God, to open their spirits unto him in Prayer. It may please God hereby (though they be negligent herein) yet they may be called to Religion. But for an old man there is much worke to doe to reade, to get any thing into his braine, when his memory is pestered with other things, and corrupt nature in him is armed with a world of excuses, that might have beene prevented by a timely and seasonable training up in a course of Religion. Prophane young persons know not what they doe when they put off Religion. Have they excuses now, they will have many more hereafter, when Satan and corruption will be much stronger. O let them beare the yoake of Religion, that is enure themselves to duties that become Christians, which may facilitate and make it easie and pliable, that it may not bee harsh to our nature. If a man doe not heare, pray and reade, he can never have Faith, Grace, Knowledge, Mortification of corruption (wherein Religion stands) but because these lead to duties that are hard to nature, and harsh,

The danger of ignorant old age.

That the longer we put off Religion, the more will bee our excuses.

it

it is wisedome to inure young ones thereto betimes, that having used themselves to these preparing duties, they may be the more fitted for the essentiall ones. That having things in the braine by reading and hearing, Grace may bee wrought in the heart, it being a more easie passage from the braine to the heart. When a man is converted it is an easie matter to bring it from the braine unto the heart, whereas a man that hath beene negligent in his youth, must then be instructed in the Principles of Religion. Therefore, it is a miserable case (though men be never so politique in the world) to have beene negligent herein till age. It breeds a great deale of difficulty to them ere they can come to be in such a state as a Christian should be in. Remember this therefore, to doe as *Paul* adviseth *Timothie* a young man, *to exercise himselfe in Godlinesse*, it is a good thing for all that are young to exercise themselves to all duties of Religion, or else pretences will grow up with age, whereby they will be indisposed every day more then other. Experience shewes it generally, wee may beleeve it: if we will not, we shall finde it hereafter too true by woefull experience.

1 Tim 6.11.

And then againe, by little and little, not onely to be enured to the yoake of Religion, but likewise *to endure difficulties, opposition and hardship*; as the Apostle stands upon it to *Timothie*, *To indure hardship and afflictions from the beginning*. If the thing be good and warrantable, neglect

5.
To inure our selves to difficulty and hard ship.
2 Tim. 2. 3.

neglect the speeches of the world: what are the speeches of a company of men in the state of nature, in their miserable condition, to regard them so as not to endure hardship, in such things, of the goodnesse whereof we are convinced? But in these daies men take up a delicate profession of Religion, men will be Religious, but they will suffer nothing, not a taunt or a scoffe, they will part with nothing, be at no losse; suffer no crosse, be at no paines with Religion further then may stand with all earthly content of this world. This delicate profession (if any thing among us) threatneth the removing of the Gospell, and blessed truths we enjoy, because we will not part with any pleasure now. How will they suffer afflictions for the Gospell (if such times come) that will not part with a vaine oath, a corrupt fashion of life, a superfluity, that wil not part with a rotten unsavourie discourse, which discovereth a rotten spirit and infecteth others. Heere is a profession of Religion indeed, that cannot have so much masterie of the corrupt heart, as to denie and overcome it selfe in things that are grossely ill. How will a man part with his blood and life, that will not part with things that hee should part withall, not onely with something to the poore and to good uses; but to part with some sinfull course of life and wicked and ungodly lusts that fight against the soule, who will not endure, not so much as a checke, who rather then they will goe under that censure wherewith the world is pleased

pleased to disgrace Religion, they will live and die like *Atheists*. This extreame tendernesse in the matters of God and of salvation, is the cause why many eternally perish.

6. *To remember what we should all be, and what we should all aime at.*

Againe, to cut of all vaine excuses: *let us oft have in thought of our heart, what wee should be and what we should all aime at, and how farre we come all short of it*; a Christian that hopes of good of his Religion, should live by faith, and depend upon God in the use of lawfull meanes. If he be as he should be, he ought to walke with God, keepe his watch with him, and doe nothing unbeseeming the eye of God. When his corruption drawes him to be careless, then hee is not as he should be, for in a right temper, he ought to be fitted to every good worke, ready for all opportunities of doing any thing that is good: because the time of this life is the seeds-time, the time of doing good, the time of reaping is in the world to come; when therefore the heart is shut when any opportunitie is offered of doing good, he may conclude, certainely, I am cold and dull, pretend what I will, I am not as I should be. *A Christian ought to abound in the worke of the Lord*, especially having such abundance of incouragements as wee have. What a world of incouragements hath a Christian? there are none to those of Religion, from the inward content that it brings heere at the houre of death, and in Glory hereafter. When we are drawne to bee scantie, niggardly, and base to things that are good, surely, this is not as it

1 Cor. 15 58.

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it ſhould be, pretend what we will to the contrary, this is a fault. A Chriſtian ſhould at all times be fit to yeeld and to render up his ſoule unto God, becauſe our life is uncertaine. When therefore, we are mooved by corruption to live in a ſtate that we cannot abide to die in, becauſe we are under the guilt of ſome ſinne: then certainely pretend what we will, our ſtate is ſo farre naught, as farre as there is unfitneſſe and unwillingneſſe to die. Let us have in the eye of our ſoule therefore, what a Chriſtian ſhould bee, aime at it, and think that when we ſtop at a lower meaſure and pitch; that (pretend what wee will) all is but from carnall wit and policie, the greateſt enemie that Religion hath.

We pray in the Lords Prayer, *Thy Kingdome come, thy will bee done in earth as it is in Heaven*, great deſires, and which ſhould be the deſires of all our hearts. But herein we play the Hypocrites, whilſt wee pray thus that *the Kingdome of God may come*, that Chriſt may rule in our hearts over luſts and deſires: yet notwithſtanding we pretend this and that excuſe, whereby we may be led with this and that luſt, we croſſe our own prayers: yet it ſheweth what pitch we ſhould aſpire to, *To ſanctifie the Lord in our hearts*, to delight in him, and truſt in him above all. When wee doe not this, wee fall ſhort of our owne prayers. And when we cannot bring our hearts to ſuffer, and to doe what God would have us to do, but are led away with our owne wills, wee are not as wee ſhould be; our wills

ſhould

ſhould be conformable to Chriſts in all things, It is our prayer, and therefore we ſhould ayme at it. Now, when fleſh and bloud ſets up a pitch of Religion, I am well enough: and yet prais, *Holloved be thy Name; Thy Kingdome come, Thy will be done,* &c. Such a man is an hypocrite; for his prayer leades him further and further ſtill till he come to Heaven, where is all perfection: untill when, our life is a life of indeavour and progreſſe. Though we be never ſo perfect, yet Chriſt may more rule and ſet up his Kingdome yet more in the heart, and further bring our will to his in all things: when fleſh and bloud ſets up cavills againſt this, we play the hypocrites with God and croſſe our ſelves. Therefore, Let us juſtifie a meaſure of Religion beyond our preſent pitch whatſoever it is, juſtifie it more and more ſtill. Thinke wee are never as we ſhould be till we be in Heaven; and never bleſſe our ſelves, but thinke that wee ſhould alwayes be on the growing hand, and whatſoever excuſe comes to hinder us from zealouſneſſe and earneſtneſſe (though it carry a ſhew of reaſon in the profeſſion of Religion:) account it to come from our corrupt hearts.

7. *To doe all our works of Religion, and our calling to God, and not to man.*

Againe, *Remember to doe all things to God, and not to man in our Callings both of Religion, and in our particular Callings,* and then whatſoever diſcouragement there is from men, we ſhould not be diſcouraged. Wee ſhall heare men continually complaine of others, that they are unthankfull perſons, and why ſhould we doe any thing

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thing for them. Why? doe it to God, If it fall within our callings let us doe justice and shew mercy: God will accept, though men doe not. It cutts of many discouragements in duties; It is best to have Gods reward. In this world it is good to meet with naughty unthankfull persons, because else we should meet with all our reward here. It is good to doe somewhat for Gods sake, and for Religion, let people be as unthankfull as they will: to say, I did it not to you, but to God. If a man regard the discouragement of the world, he shall never doe that which is good, people in the world are so unthankfull and regardlesse to those that wish them best, and that doe best to them. But if a man doe a thing to God, and doe it out of dutie and conscience, he may hould on, have hee never so many discouragements in the world, he shall loose nothing, all shall be rewarded, and is regarded.

8. *To bee perswaded that sinne is the greatest evill, and grace the greatest good in the world.*

Likewise be sure to carry this in minde, *That sinne is the greatest evill, and grace and goodnesse the best thing in the world.* Therefore, there is no excuse for sinne, from any thing in the world, for it is the worst thing in the world, which staines the soule, and hinders it from comfort. And for grace and goodnesse in the inward man, it is the best thing in the world, therefore, purchase this, though with disadvantage. It is best to avoyde sinne, though with enduring evill; yea to avoide the least sinne, by enduring the greatest evill. It is wisedome to doe good with disadvantage, when the disadvantage

is

is bounded onely in this life, the thing that I doe, beeing a thing which furthers my reckning at the day of account. Therefore, have this alway in consideration, whatsoever I suffer in this world, I will not sinne, this will cut off a world of excuses.

Therefore, let us labour to cut off all cavills, and to *arme our selves*. It is the Apostle *Peters* exhortation, as *Davids* worthies brake through the pikes to fetch him water from the well of *Bethlehem*: so all Christian worthies that looke to be Crowned, let them be armed inwardly with resolution for good things, take up resolutions that they will doe it. As *Paul* tells his scholler *Timothie* of his *purpose. Thou knowest my purpose, and manner of living*: This is the manner of a Christian life: that this, *I will not breake for all the world.* So, there is a purpose of living honestly, a manner of life, not by starts, now and then to speake a good word, and to doe a good deed. But there is a purpose and manner of life for it, he resolves alwayes for the best things.

1 Pet.4.1.

2 Tim.3.10.

Psal.119.

And to this end begg of God his Spirit, which is above all impediments. The more Spirit the more strength and courage against impediments. The more wee attend upon holy meanes, the more spirituall and heavenly light and life is set up in the soule. The more Spirituall wee are, the more we shall tread under foot all those things that stand

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us and Heaven. Let us therefore labour more and more for the Spirit, and then wee shall offer an holy violence unto good things; as it was said of *Iohn Baptists* time, *The Kingdome of God suffered violence*, men were so eager of it, as that they surprized it as a Castle, by violence. *There is no way to take Heaven but by offering violence to discouragement, corruption and whatsoever stands in the way, The violent onely takes Heaven by force.* Now when wee are spirituall, wee shall not pretend, *That there is a lyon in the way*, that there are difficulties, as the sluggard doth, that thinks himselfe wiser then many men who can render a reason: but wee shall goe boldly and couragiously on; and know that there are more incouragements for good, and stronger, then the world hath allurements to bee naught, which are but for the present life, But wee have inward ones, which will hould out in the hower of death and after. Therefore, goe on boldly and resolutely in good things, alwayes remembring to beg the Spirit of God, that may arme our Spirits with invincible courage.

Mat. 11. 12.

Now the Spirit of God brings *Faith* with it, which is a conquering victorious Grace over the world, and *sees him* that is *invisible*; which brings *love*, also *which is strong as death*: wherewith the soule being warmed, *It constraineth us to doe duties* in spight of all impediments; the Spirit of God will strengthen

Heb. 11. 27. Cant. 8. 6.

then our *hope* also of Heaven, which strengthens us against all discouragements which stand in our way; *For this hope is on greater and better grounds then discouragements are:* and hee that giveth us this hope, will inable us to possesse it.

Therefore labour First, *to have a cleare understanding of the things of God, and of the excellency of them,* for light will cause heate: Why did the Kingdome of Heaven in *Iohn Baptists time suffer violence?* why were men then so violent to cleave unto Christ? because from *that time the Gospell was more clearely manifested.* And heavenly truths the more they are discovered and layd open (there is such an excellency in them) the more they worke upon the heart and affections. Therefore, *The Kingdome of Heaven suffered violence* And where are people more earnest after good things, then in these places where the Evangelicall Truths of God are layed open most, there they breake through all discouragements whatsoever.

And so, *Labour for Faith to beleeve those truths:* which is the most victorious and conquering Grace, that will carry us through all discouragements whatsoever, because it will set greater things before us, then the discouragements are. Are wee affraid of men? *Faith* it sets *Hell* before us. Are wee allured by the world? It sets *Heaven* before us. It conquers the world with all the discouraging

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temptations thereof. Are the discouragements from impossibilities? O, It is hard, I cannot doe it. I but (saith *Paul*) *I am able to doe all things through Christ that strengthens mee.* There is a kinde of omnipotency in Faith, *O woeman bee it unto thee as thou wilt.* Wee have abundance of strength in Christ, *Faith* is but an emptie hand that goes to Christ to draw from him what it hath need of; *In Christ I can doe all things.*

Phil. 4 13.

Math. 15.

So, *To have our hearts warmed with love to him*; this Grace of the Spirit will make us passe through all discouragements, for, it hath a constraining power: *The love of Christ constraines us* (saith the Apostle) If our hearts once bee warmed with the love of Christ, this will make us to thinke nothing too deere for Christ, and will cut of all excuses and pretences whatsoever, which come from coldnesse of affection. *Love is strong as death* as we have it in this Booke, *Much water cannot quench it.* All oppositions and discouragements whatsoever, all the water which the Divell and the world hath or useth, cannot quench the heavenly fire of love, when it is kindled in any measure. *What carried the blessed Saints and Martyrs of God in all times through the pikes of all discouragements?* The Spirit of God, by the Spirit of love, from a spirit of Faith, and heavenly conviction of the excellency and truth of the things: they saw such a light which wrought upon

2 Cor. 5. 14.

Cant. 8.

upon their affections, and carried them amaine against the streame, (contrary to the streame of the times wherein they lived) that the worse the times were, the better they were.

9. *The shortnesse of injoying these helps.*

And let us consider againe, *That Christ will not be alwayes thus alluring us*, that wee shall not alwayes have these incouragements, such truths and motions of Gods Spirit, as perhaps wee feele now. Therefore, when wee feele any good motion stirred up toward Christ, entertaine it presently, haply wee shall never heare of it againe, the longer wee deferre and put it of, the worse. As a man that is rowing in a boate, let him neglect his stroake, the neglecting of one may make him tug at it five or six times after to overtake those that are before him. So nothing is gotten by sloath and negligence, wee doe but cast our selves backe the more.

10. *By setting the glory to come before us.* Heb. 11.

And let us helpe our selves with setting the Glory to come before our eyes, with *Moses* to have a *Patriarks* eye to him *that is invisible*, to see *a Countrey afarre off*, Now, *we are neerer salvation then when wee beleeved*, let us helpe our backward soules this way: that so, having still Glory in our eyes, it may helpe us to goe through all discouragements whatsoever they bee. Wee know *Zacheus*, when hee was affraid that hee should not see Christ, went before the multitude; and getting up

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upon the top of a Tree, thus helps himselfe. So doth Grace helpe it selfe by Glory. And so farre is Grace from objecting and pretending lets, as it makes supplies in Gods service: as *David*, who in this case, was pleased to bee accounted vile. Let us looke unto the Recompence of the reward, not to the present discouragements, but to the prize at the end of the race. What makes a souldier to fight hard for the victory in the end? The sweetenesse of the triumph. What makes a husbandman goe through all discouragements? hee hopes to receive a croppe in the end. Consider the issue which followeth after a conscionable carefull and Christian life, after a more neere and perfect walking with God, maintaining Communion with him. Let there bee what discouragements there will bee in the world, *the end thereof is peace,*

Psal. 37. *The end of that man is peace.* Vpon this ground, the Apostle exhorts us, *to be fruitfull, and abundant in the worke of the Lord;*

1 Cor. 15. 58. *knowing that your labour is not in vaine in the Lord.*

* * *

The end of the eighth Sermon.

THE

THE NINTH SERMON.

Cant. V. VI.

I rose to open to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawne himselfe, &c.

NAturally wee are prone to delaies in heavenly things, and then to cover all with excuses. A man is a Sophister to himselfe, whom hee first deceives, before the Divell, or the World deceive him; Which is the reason why so oft in

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in Scripture you have this mentined. *Bee not deceived, God is not mocked. Bee not deceived, neither Adulterer, nor Covetous person, nor such and such, shall ever enter into the kingdome of Heaven. Bee not deceived.* Which is an intimation, that naturally wee are very prone to bee deceived in points of the greatest consequence in the world, to flatter our selves (as the Church doth here) with false excuses. *I have put of my coate,* &c. But wee shall now see in this next verse, what becomes of all those excuses, and backewardnesse of the Church whereby she puts of Christ.

Gal 6.7.

1 Cor.6.9,19.

Verse.4. *My Beloved put in his hand by the hole of the doore, and my bowels were mooved for him,*

Verse.5. *I rose to open to my Beloved, And my hands drooppcd with mirrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling mirrh upon the handles of the locke.*

Verse.6. *I rose to open to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawne himselfe,* &c.

This comes of her sluggishnesse, and drowsinesse, that Christ absented and withdrew himselfe. There are 3. things here set downe in these *Verses* now read.

1. *Christs withdrawing of himselfe.*
2. *His gratious dealing having withdrawne himselfe.*

Hee doth not altogether leave his Church, but *puts his finger into the hole of the doore,* and then leaves some sweetenes behind him before he goes. After which is set downe,

3. *The successe of Christs departure, and with-*

withdrawing of himselfe from her.

1. *Her Bowells were mooved in her*, which were *hard* before.

2. *Shee rose up out of her bed* wherein formerly shee had framed, and composed her selfe to rest.

3. *Shee seekes and calls after him.*

But the Doctrinall points, which are to be observed out of these verses, are these,

1. *That Christ doth sometimes use to leave his Children*, as he did the Church here. *Obser.* 1.

2. *That the cause is from the Church her selfe*, as wee see how unkindly shee had used Christ, to let him attend her leisure so long. Therefore hee taking a holy state upon him, leaves the Church; The cause of his forsaking us, is in our selves, we may thanke our selves for it *Obser.* 2.

3. That though Christ deale thus with us, Yet notwithstanding, *hee never leaves us wholly, without some footesteps of his saving grace, and everlasting love, some remainders and prints hee leaves upon the soule.* So as it lingers after him, and never rests till it find him, he alwayes leaves something. There is never a totall desertion: as we see here in Christs dealing, *hee puts his finger into the hole of the doore*, he stands at the doore, and leaves *myrrh* behind him, something in the heart that causeth a lingering, aud restlesse affection in her towards Christ. *Obser.* 3.

4. *That the Church by reason of this gratious dealing of Christ (leaving somewhat behind him) is sensible of her former unkindnesse, is restlesse* *Obser.* 4.

and

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and stirrs up her selfe to indeavour more and more, till shee have recovered her former communion, and sweet fellowship with Christ, which she had before. Shee never gives over till Christ and shee meet againe in peace (as wee shall see in the prosecution,) These be the chiefe points considerable.

Obser. 1. First, *Christ doth use sometimes to leave his Church*, as here he doth, *My Beloved had withdrawne himselfe*, &c.

But what kind of leaving is it?

Wee must distinguish of Christs leavings; and withdrawings of himselfe. They are either in regard of outward or inward comforts and helpes.

1. Outward, as Christ leaves his Church sometimes, *by taking away the meanes of Salvation*, the Ministery, *or by taking away outward comforts*; which is a withdrawing of his, especially if hee accompany the taking of them away with some signes of his displeasure, or sense of his anger, as usually it falls out. This doth imbitter all crosses, and losses, namely when they come from Christ, as a Testimony of his anger for our former unkindnesse.

2. *Sometimes his forsaking is more inward*, and that is double, *Either in regard of peace, and joy*, sweet inward comfort that the soule had wont to feele in the holy Ordinances by the Spirit of Christ; *Or in regard of strength, and assistance.* There is desertion in regard of *Comfort* and in regard of *strength.* Sometimes he

hee leaves them to themselves in regard of strength and supportation to fall into some sinne to cure some greater sinne perhaps.

Now that Christ thus leaves his Church it is true of all, both of the body and of each particular member of the Church.

It is true of the *whole body* of the Church, for you have the Church complaining, *Isa.* 49. 14. *God hath forgotten me. Can a mother forget her child?* (saith God againe) so *Psal.* 44. 9. and in other places, the Church complaines of *forsakings*, The Scripture is full of complaints in this kind. 1. *In the whole Body.*

It is true *of the severall members* and especially of the most eminent members, as we see holy *Iob* complaines, as if God *had set him* (as it were) *a but to shoot at*, and had opposed himselfe against him. So *David* complaines (*Psal.* 88. 11. *Psal.* 77. 9. and *Psal.* 60. 1. and in other Psalmes) of Gods anger. *Correct mee not in thine anger.* The Psalmes are full of this; so as it would be time unprofitably spent to be large in a point so cleare, that every one knoweth well enough, who reads and understands the Psalmes. So *Ionah* likewise felt a kind of *forsaking*, when he was in the middest of the sea, when the *waves* were *without*, and *terrors within*, when he was in the middest of *hell*, (as it were) thus you see the instances cleere the point. Iob. 7. 2. Ionah. 2. 4, 5.

The *ends*, that God hath in it, are many, Firſt, *To indeare his presence the more to us*, which we slighted too much before. It is our 1. *To indeare former slighted presence.*

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our corruption, the not valuing of things till they be gone, wee set not the true price upon them when wee enjoy them. When we enjoy good things, we looke at the grievances which are mingled with the good, and forget the good, which when it is gone then wee remember the good. The *Israelites* could remember their onyons and garleeke, and forget their slaverie. So because *Manna* was present, they despised *Manna*, and that upon one inconvenience it had, *It was ordinary with them.* Thus the corrupt heart of man is prone in the enjoying of favours, If it have any grievance, it murmures at that, and it troubles and makes them forget all the goodnesse and sweetenesse of what they enjoy. But on the contrary when God withdrawes those good things from us, then we forget those former inconveniences, and begin to think what good we had by them. This is the poyson and corruption of our Nature.

Numb. 11.5.

2. *To trie the truth of our graces and affections.*

Againe, *Christ seemes to forsake us, to try the truth of the Graces and affections in us,* whether they be true or not, and to cause us to make after him, when hee seemes to forsake us, as undoubtedly wee shall, where there is truth of grace planted in the heart in any measure.

3. *To teach us wisdome how to deale with others.* 2 Cor. 1.4.

And *In regard of others, he doth it to teach us heavenly wisdome how to deale with those in affliction,* It makes us wise, tender, and successefull in dealing with others, when wee have felt the like particular grievance our selves, as *Gal. 6.1. Bretheren if a man be overtaken in a fault,*

you that are spirituall restore such an one in the spirit of meekenesse, considering thy selfe, least thou also be tempted, Experience of spirituall griefe in this kind, will make us fit, able and wise every way to deale with others.

4. *To weane us from the world.*

This serves likewise *To weane us from the world, in the plenty and abundance of all earthly things*; For take a Christian that hath no crosse in the world, let him find some estrangement of Christ from his spirit, that he findsnot the comforts of the Holy Ghost, and that inlargement which in former times he enjoyed, and all the wealth hee hath, the earthly contentments he enjoyes please him not, nor can content that soule, which hath ever felt sweet communion with Christ. Againe, how should we pray with earnestnesse of affection, *Thy Kingdome come* (in the time of prosperity,) except there were somewhat in this kind to raise up the soule to desire to be gone? Now it is our subjection to these alterations, and changes, ebbings, and flowings, sometimes to have the sence of Gods love in Christ, and sometimes to want it, sometimes to feele his love, and sometimes againe the fruits of his anger and displeasure, which serves exceedingly to stirre up mens desires of Heaven.

5. *To correct our securitie.*

5. In this place heere, the especiall end was *To correct the security, and ill carriage of the Church.*

6. *To prepare the soule for a neerer communion with him.*

And likewise, *To prepare the Church by this desertion, and seeming forsaking for neerer communion.*

munion. For indeed Christ did not forsake her, but to her feeling, to bring her in the sequell, to have neerer communion and union with himselfe then ever shee had before, God forsakes, that he may not forsake; hee seemes strange, that hee may be more friendly, this is Christs usage, *hee personates an adversary, when he intends to shew the greatest effects of his love,* as wee may see afterwards in the passages following.

7. *That wee may know throughly what the bitternesse of sin is.*

And also, *To make us to know throughly the bitternesse of sinne,* that we may grow to a further hatred of that which deprives us of so sweete a communion; Wee thinke sinne a trifle, and never know it enough till the time of temptation, that conscience be awakened and opened, that it appeares in its right colours.

8. *That wee may taste a little what Christ suffered.*

And then againe, *That wee may know what Christ suffered, and underwent for us in the sence of Gods wrath, in the absence of his favour for a time.* This the humane Nature could never have suffered, if his divinity had withdrawne it selfe. Now all of us must sip of that cup, whereof Christ dranke the dreggs, having a taste what it is to have God to forsake us, for the most part, those beleevers who live any time, (especially those of great partes,) God deales thus with, weaker Christians hee is more indulgent unto; at such times we know of what use a Mediatour is, and how miserable our condition were without such an one, both to have borne and overcome the wrath of God for us, which burden

burden hee could never have undergone, but had sunke under it, but for the *Hypostaticall union.*

Let us not therefore censure any Christian, when we find that their course hath beene good, and gratious, yet notwithstanding they seeme to want comfort, let us not wonder at them, as if God had utterly forsaken them, indeed sometimes they thinke themselves forsaken, and the world thinks them so too, *that God regards them not*, They are people of no respect either to God or to others, as you have the Church in the Psalmes complaining, as if God had forsaken them, so they thinke themselves forsaken, and the world thinks them so too, and neglects them. Therefore in so dooing we shall censure the generation of the Righteous. It was thus with the Head of the Church, with the whole Church, and with every particular member; neither is it fit wee should alwayes enjoy the sence of Gods love. Christ by heavenly wisedome dispenseth of his sweetenesse, comforts and peace, as may stand with our soules best good, and wee should as much take heed of censuring our selves in that condition, as if we were rejected and cast away of God. Wee must judge our selves at such times by Faith, and not by feeling; looking to the promises and Word of God, and not to our present sense and apprehension.

Vse. 1. *Not to censure other Christians wanting comfort.*

Psal. 44. 9.

Againe if this be so, Learne to prepare and looke for it before hand, and to get some grounds of

Vse. 2. *To prepare and looke for desertion.*

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of comfort, some promises out of the word, and to keepe a good conscience. O it is a heavy thing, when God shall seeme to be angry with us, and our conscience at the same time shall accuse us, when the Divell shall lay sinnes hard to our charge, and some affliction at the same time lie heavy upon the sore and guilty soule. If we have not somewhat layed up before hand, what will become of the poore soule, when Heaven, and Earth, and Hell, and all shall seeme to be against it. There are few that come to Heaven, but they know what these things meane. It is good therefore to looke for them, and to prepare some comforts before hand.

But what here should be the inward mooving cause? It is in the Church her selfe, for marke the coherence; she had turned of Christ with excuses, pretences, and delatory answers, and now presently upon it Christ forsakes her in regard of her feeling, and of the sweet comfort she formerly enjoyed, The point is.

Obser. 2. *That the cause rests in our selves why Christ withdrawes comfort from our soules.*

Causes of desertion in our selves.

If we search our owne hearts we shall find it so, and usually the causes in our selves are these, as it was in the Church here. 1. *When we are unkind to Christ,* and repell the sweet motions of the Spirit. 2. *When we improove not the pretious meanes of Salvation that we enjoy.* 3. *When wee are careless of our conversation and company.* 4. *When we linger after carnall liberties, and ease.*

1. 2. 3. 4.

5.

5. *When we yeeld to carnall policie*, and ſhifts to keepe us of from the power of Religion, to goe on in a luke warme courſe. 6. *When we linger after earthly things and comforts*, and wrap our ſelves up in fleſhly pollicy for eaſe. 7. *When we tremble not at Gods judgements, and threatnings, and at the ſignes of them*; with many ſuch things. Where theſe diſpoſitions are, we need not wonder if wee find not the comforts of Chriſt, and of the Holy Ghoſt in us with the gratious preſence of his Spirit; the cauſe is in our ſelves. But ſecurity hath beene at laige ſpoken of before, where the Churches *ſleepe* was handled, therefore the point ſhall not be here inlarged, but onely ſome uſe made of it, as may ſerve for the preſent purpoſe.

5.

6.

7.

If Chriſt ſhould take away the comforts that we enjoy, and remoove himſelfe; and his dwelling from us, (for he is now yet among us and knocks at our doores,) doe we not give him juſt cauſe to depart? what a ſpirit of ſlumber poſſeſſeth us, which will be awaked with nothing to ſeeke after Chriſt? how few lay hould upon God, preſſe upon him, wreſtle with him by prayer? to hide themſelves before the evill day come, as they ſhould doe. Therefore if Chriſt have abſented himſelfe a long time from the Church in generall, and withdrawne the comfort and preſence of his ordinances and in particular withheld the ſweet comforts of our ſpirits, and our peace, ſo that we ſee him in the contrary ſignes of his diſpleaſure and

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anger, as if hee did not regard and respect us, we have given him just cause so to doe. Wee see here how the Church used Christ and so doe we with the like security, and a spirit of slumber, with unkindnesse, notwithstanding all the provocations that Christ useth to winne us; hee leaves us not, untill he be left first, for he desires to have neerer acquaintance, communion and fellowship with the soule; as we have seene in the former verse, *My love, my dove, my undefiled, Open to mee*, &c. Therefore if we doe not injoy more acquaintance with Christ then we doe, and walke more in the comforts of the Holy Ghost; it is meerely from our owne indisposition and security. Therefore let us censure our selves in this kind, and not call Christ an enemie, as if he had forgotten, and God had forsaken. Take heed of such a spirit of murmuring, If such a state befall us, let us labour to lay our hand upon our mouth, and to justifie Christ. It is just with thee thus to leave me, to give mee over to this terrrour, to deale thus with me, that have dealt so unkindly with thee; so to justifie God, and accuse our selves, is the best way to recover spirituall comfort.

Acts 9.39.

The best way to recover spirituall comfort.

Obser. 3. Well, for the third Point. *That howsoever Christ be provoked by the Churches ingratitude, drowsinesse, and careless carriage, to leave her in regard of her feeling, and of inward comfort. Yet notwithstanding he is so gracious, as to leave something behind him, that shewes indeed, that hee had not left the Church altogether, but onely in some*

regard.

regard. For howsoever Christ (in regard of some order of his *providence*) leave it, yet in regard of another order of his *providence*, care and mercy, he doth not leave it, so as one way which he takes must sometimes give place to another way of his working in ordering things. Sometimes he is present in a way of comfort, that is one order of his dispensation: and when he sees that that is neglected, then hee withdrawes his comforts and hides his gratious countenance, yet he is then present still in an other order and way, though we discerne it not, that is, in a way of humbling the soule, letting it see its sinne. So here howsoever Christ had withdrawne himselfe in regard of this manner of his dealing, in respect of comfort, that the Church did not now see his grace, favour, yet he left behind him a spirit of grace, to affect her heart with griefe, sorrow, and shame, and to stirre up her indeavours to seeke after him, (as it is said here,) *I rose to open to my Beloved and my hands dropt myrrh, and my fingers sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lockes.*

Here observe these three things which shall be briefly named because they shall be touched elsewhere.

Christs grace is the cause of our grace, *Obser.*

He first leaves myrrh, and then her fingers drop myrrh: our oyle is from his oyle, the *head beeing annoynted, the oyle ran downe to the skirts of Aarons garments; Out of his fulnesse we receive grace for grace,* that is, our grace is an- Pſal. 133. 2. & 36. 9. Joh. 1. 16.

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of comfort, some promises out of the word, and to keepe a good conscience. O it is a heavy thing, when God shall seeme to be angry with us, and our conscience at the same time shall accuse us, when the Divell shall lay sinnes hard to our charge, and some affliction at the same time lie heavy upon the sore and guilty soule. If we have not somewhat layed up before hand, what will become of the poore soule, when Heaven, and Earth, and Hell, and all shall seeme to be against it. There are few that come to [illegible] these things [illegible] to looke for [illegible] nforts before [illegible] inward moo- [illegible] her selfe, for [illegible] ned of Christ [illegible] tory answers, [illegible] rsakes her in [illegible] weet comfort [illegible] t is.

Irregular Pagination.

Obser. [illegible] *the cause rests in our selves why Christ withdrawes comfort from our soules.*

Causes of desertion in our selves.

If we search our owne hearts we shall find it so, and usually the causes in our selves are these, as it was in the Church here.

1. 1. *When we are unkind to Christ,* and repell the sweet motions of the Spirit.

2. 2. *When we improove not the pretious meanes of Salvation that we enjoy.*

3. 3. *When wee are careless of our conversation and company.*

4. 4. *When we linger after carnall liberties, and ease.*

5.

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5. *When we yeeld to carnall policie*, and shifts to keepe us of from the power of Religion, to goe on in a luke warme course. 6. *When we linger after earthly things and comforts*, and wrap our selves up in fleshly pollicy for ease. 7. *When we tremble not at Gods judgements, and threatnings, and at the signes of them*; with many such things. Where these dispositions are, we need not wonder if wee find not the comforts of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost in us with the gratious presence of his Spirit; the cause is in our selves. But security hath beene at laige spoken of before, where the Churches *sleepe* was handled, therefore the point shall not be here inlarged, but onely some use made of it, as may serve for the present purpose.

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If Christ should take away the comforts that we enjoy, and remoove himselfe; and his dwelling from us, (for he is now yet among us and knocks at our doores,) doe we not give him just cause to depart? what a spirit of slumber possesseth us, which will be awaked with nothing to seeke after Christ? how few lay hould upon God, presse upon him, wrestle with him by prayer? to hide themselves before the evill day come, as they should doe. Therefore if Christ have absented himselfe a long time from the Church in generall, and withdrawne the comfort and presence of his ordinances and in particular withheld the sweet comforts of our spirits, and our peace, so that we see him in the contrary signes of his displeasure and

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Vse. This should teach us, the necessity of dependance upon Christ for whatsoever we have or would have, which dependance upon Christ is the life of our life, the soule of our soules.

Againe observe from hence, that the Churches fingers dropped myrrh when she opened the doore, and stirred up her selfe to indeavour. When first her bowels were mooved, then shee makes to the doore, and then her hands dropped myrrh, so that:

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1 Cron. 28. 20. *Arise and be doing and the Lord shall be with thee,* (saith *David* to *Salomon*,) so let us rowse up our selves to indeavour, and we shall find a gracious presence of Christ, and a blessed assistance of the Spirit of Christ, who will shew himselfe in the midst of indeavours. *To him that hath shall be given*: what is that? To him that hath (if he

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I ſpeake to any Chriſtians experience, if in the midſt of obedience they doe not find that comfort they looked for, and that it is meate and drinke to doe Gods will. Therefore keepe not off and ſay, I am dead and drowſy, therefore I ſhall be ſtill ſo; you are deceived, fall upon obedience and practiſing of holy duties, and in the midſt thereof thou ſhalt find the preſence and aſſiſtance of Gods Spirit, that will comfort thee.

The third thing obſerveable from hence is this: *That Gods Graces are ſweet.* *Obſer. 3.*

Pleaſant and ſweet, compared here to myrrh which was an ingredient in the *holy oyle*, grace makes us ſweet, prayers are ſweet, as it is *Rev.* 8. 4. Chriſt mingleth them with his owne ſweet odours, and ſo takes and offers them to God. Holy Obedience is ſweet and delightfull to God and to the conſcience, it brings peace and delight to others, therefore they are called *fruites*; fruit doth not onely imply and ſhew the iſſuing of good things from the root.

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but there is also a pleasantnesse in it, so there is a delightfulnesse in good workes as there is in fruite to the taste: Therefore if we would be sweet and delightfull to God, let us labour to have grace. If we would thinke of our selves with contentment, and have inward sweetnesse, Let us labor for the graces of Gods Spirit, these are like *myrrh*. *The wicked are an abomination unto the Lord*, who abhors them and whatsoever is in them. But, *the righteous and sincere man is his delight*. Therefore if we would approve our selves to God, and feele that hee hath delight in us; labour to be such as hee may delight in.

Prov. 15. 8.

Vse. Wherefore let the discouraged soule make this use of it; not to be affraid to doe that which is good upon feare we should sinne. Indeed sinne will cleave to that we doe, but Christ will pardon the sinne, and accept that which is sweet of his owne Spirit, Let us not esteeme basely of that which Christ esteemes highly of; nor let that be vile in our eyes that is pretious in his: let us labour to bring our hearts to comfortable obedience, for it is a sweet sacrifice to God.

Now whence came all this? from this that is mentioned, verse. 4. *My Beloved put in his hand by the hole of the doore, and my bowels were moved for him.* First for that expression, he put his finger in by the hole of the doore. It implies here that Christ before he departed left by his Spirit an impression on the Churches heart which

which deepely affected her to seeke after him.

The *Fingers* spoken of, are nothing but *the power of his Spirit:* as the usuall Scripture phrase is, *This is Gods finger, Gods mighty hand,* without which all ordinances are ineffectuall, *Paul may plant and Apollos may water,* but all is nothing without the working of the Spirit, The motions whereof are most strong, being *Gods finger,* whereby he wrought all that affection in the Church, which is here expressed. Christ before he leaveth the Church, *puts his finger into the hole of the doore,* that is, he workes somewhat in the soule by his Spirit, which stirred up a constant indeavour to seeke after him. For why else followes it, *her bowells were mooved after him,* which implies a worke of the Spirit upon her bowels, expresst in her griefe for his absence, and shame for her refusing his entrance, and whereby her heart was mooved, and turned in her to seeke after him. From whence thus explained observe,

Exod. 8. 19.

1 Cor. 3. 7.

Obser. *That outward meanes will doe no good unlesse the finger of Christ come to doe all that is good.*

The finger of Christ is the Spirit of Christ, that is, a kind of Divine power goes from him in hearing and speaking the word of God, and in prayer, there is more then a mans power in all this, if these work any effect *Christ must put his finger in;* when truyes are unfolded to us in the Ministery of the word, all is to no purpose, but the sounding of a voyce, unlesse the finger of Christ open the heart and worke in the soule.

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Vse. 1. Let us make this use of it therefore, not to rest in any meanes whatsoever, but desire the presence of Christs finger to moove, and to worke upon our hearts and soules; Many careless Christians goe about the ordinances of God, and never regard this power of Christ, this mighty power, *the finger of Christ*. Thereupon they find nothing at all that is divine and spirituall wrought in them. For as it required a God to redeeme us, to take our nature, wherein he might restore us; so likewise it requires the power of God to alter our natures. We could not be brought into the state of grace without Divine satisfaction, and we cannot be altered to a frame of grace without a Divine finger, the finger of God working upon our hearts and soules. This should moove us in all the ordinances of God that we attend upon, to lift up our hearts in the midst of them: Lord, let me feele the finger of thy Spirit writing thy word upon my heart. *Turne us O Lord, and wee shall be turned.* Pray for this quickning, and inlivening; for this strengthening Spirit: all comes by it.

2. From this that it is said here, *That Christ puts his finger into the hole of the doore before hee removed it* and withdrew himselfe, Observe,

Obser. 2. How graciously Christ doth deale with us, *That he doth alwayes leave some grace, before hee doth offer to depart?* Let us therefore for the time to come, lay, and store this up as a ground of comfort, that howsoever Christ may leave us, yet notwithstanding hee will never leave us wholly,

wholly, but as he gave us his holy Spirit at first, so he will continue him in us by some gracious worke or other, either by way of *comfort*, or of *strength* to uphold us. Perhaps we may need more sorrow, more humility, then of any other grace. For, Winter is as good for the growing of things as the Spring, because, were it not for this, where would be the killing of weedes, and wormes, and preparing of the ground, and land for the spring; So it is as needfull for Christians to find the presence of Christ in the way of *humiliation*, and *abasement*, causing us to afflict our owne soules, as to feele his presence in *Peace*, *Ioy*, and *Comfort*. In this life we cannot be without this gracious dispensation. We may therefore comfort our selves, that howsoever Christ leaves us, yet he will alwayes leave somewhat behind him, as here he left some *myrrh* after him upon the handle of the doore; some *myrrh* is left alwayes behind him upon the soule, which keepes it in a state and frame of grace, and sweetens it. *Myrrh* was one of the ingredients in the holy oyle, as it is *Exod.* 30. 30. and so this leaving of myrrh behind him, signifies the oyle of grace left upon the soule, that inabled the Church to doe all these things, which are after spoken of.

But you will say, How doth this appeare when in some desertion a Christian finds no grace, strength, or comfort at all? that nothing is left? *Object.*

It is answered, *they alwayes doe*. Take those who *Answ.*

who at any time have had experience of the love of God, and of Christ formerly, take them at the worst, you shall find from them some sparkles of grace, broken speeches of tryed secret comfort, some inward strength and struggling against corruptions, their spirits endeavouring to recover themselves from sinking too low, and with something withstanding both despaire and corruption. Take a Christian at the worst, there will be a discovery of the Spirit of Christ left in him, notwithstanding all desertion. This is universally in all in some measure though perhaps it is not discerned to a Christian himselfe, but to those that are able to judge. Sometimes others can read our evidences better then our selves. A Christian that is in temptation cannot judge of his owne estate, but others can; and so, at the very worst, he hath alwayes somewhat left in him, whereby he may be comforted, Christ never leaves his Church and Children that are his wholly. Those that are wholly left, they never had saving grace, as *Achitophell*, *Cain*, *Saule* and *Judas* were left to themselves. But for the Children of God, if ever they found the power of sanctifying grace, *Christ whom he loves, he loves to the end*; From whom he departs not, unlesse he leaves somewhat behind him, that sets an edge upon the desires to seeke after him.

Ioh. 13. 1.

Vse. 2. Make this 2. use of it, To magnifie the gracious love and mercy of Christ; that when we deserve the contrary to be left altogether, yet not-

notwithstanding so graciously he deales with us. Behold in this his dealing the mercy of Christ, hee will not suffer the Church to be in a state of security, but will rather (to cure her) bring her to another opposite state of griefe and sorrow, as we shall see in the next point, How that which Christ left in the heart of the Church, so afflicted her, *That her bowels were turned in her.* Whereupon she riseth, seekes, and inquires after Christ by the watch-men, and others. So she saith of her selfe.

My bowels were mooved in mee, &c.

What was that? My heart was affected full of sorrow and griefe for my unkind dealing with Christ. Hereby those affections were stirred up (that were afore sleepy and secure) to godly griefe, sorrow, and shame: For, God hath planted affections in us, and joyned them with conscience, as the executioners with the judge. So that, when as conscience accuseth of any sinne, either of *Omission* or *Commission*, affections are ready to be the executioners within us. Thus to prevent eternall damnation, God hath set up a throne in our own hearts to take revenge and correction by our owne affections, godly sorrow and mourning, as here the Church saith, *My bowels were turned in mee,* It was a shame and griefe, springing out of love to Christ that had beene so kind, patient and full of forbearance to her. *My bowels were turned in mee,* that is, sorrow and griefe were upon me for my unkind dealing.

The

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Observ. The observation from hence is,

That ſecurity, and a cold dull ſtate, produceth a contrary temper: that is, thoſe that are cold, dull, ſecure, and put of Chriſt, he ſuffers them to fall into ſharpe ſorrowes and griefes.

We uſually ſay, cold diſeaſes muſt have hot and ſharp remedies; It is moſt true ſpiritually, ſecurity, which is a kind of lethargy, (a cold diſeaſe) forgetting of God, and our duty to him, muſt have a hot and ſharpe cure; And the lethargy is beſt cured by a Burning Ague. So Chriſt deales here, he puts his finger in at the hole of the doore, and leaves grace behind to worke upon the bowels of the Church, to make her grieve and be aſhamed for her unkind dealing. Thus he cures ſecurity by ſorrow. This is the beſt concluſion of ſinne.

Observ. And we may obſerve withall, That even *ſinnes of omiſſion* they bring *griefe, ſhame,* and *ſorrow,* And in the iſſue through Chriſts ſanctifying them, theſe which they breed, conſume the *Parent,* that is, *ſinne* brings forth *ſorrow, ſhame,* and *griefe,* which are a meanes to cure ſinne. *Security* breeds *this mooving of the bowe's*; which *mooving* helpes *ſecurity.* Would wee therefore prevent ſorrow, ſhame, and griefe, Take heed then of *ſecurity* the cauſe that leads to them; yea of ſinnes of *omiſſion,* wherein there is more danger, then in ſinnes of *commiſſion.* The ſinnes of carnall wicked men, are uſually ſinnes of *commiſſion,* moſt which breake out outragiouſly, and thereby taynt themſelves with

with open sinnes. But the sinnes of Gods people (who are neerer to him) are for the most part sinnes of *omission*, that is negligence, coldnesse, carelessenesse in duty, want of zeale, and of care they should have in stirring up the graces of God in them, as the Church here, which did not give way to Christ, nor shooke of security.

Let us esteeme as slightly as we will of sinnes of *omission*, and carelessenesse; they are enough to bring men to hell if God be not the more mercifull. It is not required onely that we doe no harme, and keepe our selves from outward evills, but we must doe good in a good manner, and have a care to be fruitfull, and watchfull, which if wee doe not, this temper will bring griefe, shame, and sorrow afterwards; As here even for sinnes of omission, deadnesse, and dullnesse, wee see the Church is left by Christ; *and her bowells are turned in her*: For careles neglect, and omission of duty to God, is a presage, and forerunner of some downfall and dejection. And commonly it is true, when a man is in a secure and careless estate, a man may read his destiny, (though he have beene never so good) nay the rather, if hee be good, Such a one is in danger to fall into some sharpe punishment, or into some sinne; for of all states and tempers, God will not suffer a Christian to be in a secure, lazy, dead state, when he cannot performe things comfortably to God, or himselfe, or to others, a dead secure estate is so hatefull

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hatefull to him, (decay in our first love, this lukewarme temper) that he will not endure it, it either goes before some greate sinne, crosse, affliction, or judgement.

My bowells were moved in me.

And good reason, it was a suitable correction, to the sinne wherein shee offended. For Christ his bowells were turned towards her in love and pitty, *My love, my dove, my undefiled*, in which case, shee neglecting him, it was fit shee should find *moving of bowels* in another sence (out of love too) but in shame and mourning. Christ here leaves her to seeke after him, that had waited and attended her leisure before, as we shall see after.

The next thing wee may hence observe, in that, *That her bowels were turned in her* from something left in the hole of the doore by the Spirit of Christ, is,

Obser. *That Christ hath our affections in his government.*

He hath our bowels in his rule and governement, more then we our selves have. Wee cannot of our selves rule our griefe, shame, sorrow, or such affections as these, The wisest man in the world cannot award griefe, and sorrow, when God will turne it upon his bowells, and make a man ashamed and confounded in himselfe. All the wit and pollicy in the world cannot suppresse those affections. For Christ rules our hearts. *The hearts of Kings are in his hand, as the rivers of water*, as well

Prov. 21. 1.

as

as the hearts of ordinary persons.

If hee set any thing upon the soule to afflict it and cast it downe, it shall afflict it, if it be but a conceit, if hee will take away the *raines* from the soule, and leave it to its owne passion, removing away its guard, (for he by his Spirit guards our soules with peace, by commaunding of tranquillity;) So as let him but leave it to its selfe, and it will teare it selfe in sunder, as *Achitophell* who being left to himselfe, did teare himselfe in peeces; *Cain* also being thus left, was disquieted, tormented, and wracked himselfe. So *Iudas* in this case, being divided in himselfe, you see what became of him; Let Christ but leave us to our owne passion of sorrow; what will become of us but misery? Hee hath more rule therefore of our passions then we our selves have, because we cannot rule them graciously, nor can we stay them when we would.

2 Sam. 17. 23.

Gen. 4.

Mat. 27. 3, 4.

Therefore this should strike an awe in us of God, with a care to please him: For, there is not the wisest man in the world, but if he remove his guard from his soule, and leave him to himselfe; if there were no Divell in hell, yet he would make him his owne tormentor and executioner. Therefore the Apostle makes this sweete promise, *Phil.* 4. 7. He bids them pray to God; *And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shoulde* [*guard*] *their soules*, &c. So the word is in the originall. It is a great matter for the keeping of Gods people,

Vse.

to

SERM. IX.

to have their ſoules guarded.

Her bowells were turned in her.

Obſer. Here againe, as the concluſion of all this, we ſeeing this eſtate of the Church, may wonder at Chriſts carriage towards her in this world. Chriſt is wonderfull in his *Saints*, and in his *goodneſſe* towards them, Sometimes alluring them, as we ſee Chriſt the Church here; wondrous in *patience*, notwithſtanding their provocation of him; wondrous in his *deſertions*, wondrous *in leaving ſomething behind him in deſertions* Thoſe that are his he will not leave them without grace, whereby they ſhall ſeeke him againe. Nay, the falling out of lovers, ſhall be the renewing of freſh and new love, more conſtant then ever the former was. Thus our bleſſed Saviour goes beyond us in our deſerts, taking advantage (even) of our ſecurity (for our greater good) making all worke to good in the iſſue, which ſhall end in a more neere and cloſe communion betweene Chriſt and his Church, then ever before. Carnall men feele not theſe changes, ebbings and flowings; they are not acquainted with Gods forſakings. Indeed their whole life is nothing but a forſaking of God, and Gods forſaking of them, who gives them outward comforts, peace and friends in the world, wherein they ſollace themſelves, but for inward communion with him, any ſtrength to holy duties, or againſt ſinne, for to be inſtruments for Gods honour, and ſervice, to doe any good, they are careleſſe.

1 Theſ 3.

Rom. 8. 28.

For

For they live here to ſerve their owne turnes, leaving their ſtate and inheritance behind them. The Scripture ſaith, *They have no changes, therefore they feare not God,* and ſo they goe downe to Hell quietly and ſecurely. O but it is otherwiſe with Gods Children, they are toſſed up and downe, God will not ſuffer them to proſper, or live long in a ſecure, drowſy ſinfull ſtate, the continuance wherein is a fearefull evidence, that ſuch an one as yet hath no ſaving grace, nor that he yet belongs to God, ſeeing Chriſt hates ſuch an eſtate, and will not ſuffer his to be long therein, but will ſhift and remove them from veſſell to veſſell, from condition to condition, till hee have wrought in them that diſpoſition of ſoule that they ſhall regard and love him more and more, and have neerer, and neerer communion with him.

Pſal. 35. 19.

* *
*

The end of the ninth Sermon.

THE TENTH SERMON.

Cant. V. VI.

I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawne himselfe, and was gone: my soule failed when he spake, I sought him but could not find him, I called him but hee gave no answer.

THus we see that the life of a Christian is trouble upon trouble as wave upon wave, God will not suffer us to rest in security, but one way or other he will fire us out of our starting holes, and make us to runne after him, how much better

SERM. X.

were it for us then to doe our workes chearfully and joyfully, *so to runne as we may obtaine*, then to be thus hurried up and downe, and through our owne default comming into desertions and there receiving rebukes and blowes and delayes ere we have peace againe, as it fell out with the Church in the sequell, for this text is but the beginning of her (seeming) misery. The *watch-men* after this, *found her, and wounded her*, &c. But Heaven is more worth then all, now that her affections are set on fire, from thence shee bestirrs her selfe, is resolute to find out her *beloved*, whom she highly values above all this world. How her affections were stirred by Christs putting in his finger at the hole of the doore we have heard. Now followes her action therupon, for here is rising, opening, seeking, calling and enquiring after Christ.

Action followes affection. After her bowells are moved she ariseth and openeth, from whence we may further observe,

Obser. *That where truth of affection is, it will discover it selfe in the outward man, one way or other.* If there be any affection of love and piety to God, there will be eyes lift up, knees bended downe, and hands stretched forth to Heaven. If there be any griefe for sinne, there will be the face dejected, the eyes looking downe, some expression or other: If there be a desire there will be a making forth to the thing desired. For, the outward-man is commanded by the inward, which hath a kind of soveraigne commanding

commanding power over it; and ſayes, doe this and it doth it, ſpeake this and it ſpeakes it, therefore thoſe whoſe courſes of life are not gratious, their affections and their hearts are not good, for where the affections are good, the actions will be ſutable. *Her bowells were moved in her*, and preſently ſhe ſhewes the truth of her affection, in that ſhe maketh after him.

1. *Her ſoule failed when hee ſpake.*
2. *Shee makes after him,*

My ſoule failed when he ſpake, I ſought him but I could not find him.

Of Chriſts withdrawing himſelfe we ſpake in generall before, wherefore we will leave that and proceed.

My ſoule failed when he ſpake.

That is, her ſoule failed when ſhe remembred what he had ſpoke, when he ſtood at the doore, and ſaid, *Open to me my Siſter, my Love, my Dove, my Vndefiled, for my head is wet with the dew*, &c. Now when Gods Spirit had wrought upon her, then ſhe remembred what Chriſt had ſaid: all thoſe ſweet allurements were effectuall now unto her, eſpecially when ſhe ſaw that after thoſe ſweet allurements Chriſt had withdrawne himſelfe, for that is the meaning of theſe wordes: (*My ſoule failed when hee ſpake unto mee*) Hee did not ſpeake now: but her ſoule failed after he ſpake; for ſo it ſhould be read, that is, after ſhe remembred his ſpeech to her: for, now when ſhe opened he was not there, therefore he could not ſpeake to her.

SERM. X.

obser.

The Word of Christ howsoever for the present it be not effectuall, yet afterwards it will be in the remembrance of it.

To those that are gracious it will be effectuall when the Holy Ghost comes to seale it further upon their heart: Christ spake many things to his *Disciples* which they forgot, but when afterwards the *Holy Ghost* the *comforter* was come, his office was, *to bring all things to their remembrance that they had forgotten before.* The Holy Ghost taught them not new things, but brought former things to their remembrance; for God will make the word effectuall at one time or other, perhaps the word we heare is not effectuall for the present, it may afterwards, many yeares after, when God awakes our consciences.

Ioh. 14. 26.

And as this is true of Gods Children, the seed now sowne in them perhaps will not grow up till many yeares after, so it is true also of those that are not Gods Children, they thinke they shall never heare againe of those things they heare, perhaps they will take order by sensuallity, hardning of their hearts (and through Gods judgements withall concurring) that conscience shall not awake in this world, but it shall awake one day; for it is put into the heart to take Gods part and to witnesse against us for our sinnes. It shall have and performe its office hereafter, use it as you will now, and it will preach over those things againe that you now heare. You shall heare againe of them but it shall be a barren hearing. Now

we

we may heare fruitfully to doe us good, but afterwards we shall call to mind what we have heard and it shall cut us to the heart. *Dives* (wee know) had *Moses* and the *Prophets* to instruct him, but he never heeded them in his life, untill afterwards to his torment. So men never heed what they heare and reade, they put of all and lay their consciences asleepe, but God will bring them afterwards to remembrance: but because it is a point especially of comfort to the Church.

Luk. 16. 25.

Labour we all of us to make this use of it, to be diligent and carefull to heare and attend upon the ordinances of God, for howsoever that we heare is not effectuall for the present but seemes as dead seed cast into the heart, yet God will give it *a body after*, as the Apostle speakes, at one time or other. And that which we heare now the Holy Ghost will bring it to our remembrance when wee stand in most need of it.

Vse. *To attend diligently upon the ordinances of God*

1 Cor. 15. 28.

My soule failed when hee spake.

She was in a spirituall swoone and deliquium upon his withdrawing, whence the point considerable is,

That Christ doth leave his Church sometimes and bring it very low in their owne apprehensions, that their hearts fayle them for want of his presence. So it was with *David*, so with *Ionah*, so with the Church, *Lam.* 3. 1. we see it at large.

Observ.

Psal. 38. 2, 3. Ionah. 2. 2.

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Reason.

SERM. X.

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SERM. X.

corrupt that it muſt be brought as low as poſſible may be before there will be a ſpring of new and good blood and ſpirits: ſo we may fall into ſuch a ſtate of ſecurity that nothing will bring us to a right temper, but extreame purging. And uſually God deales thus with ſtrong wits and parts (if they be holy) *David* and *Salomon* were men excellently quallified, yet when they taſted of the pleaſures and contentments of the world too deepe, anſwerably they had and ſo (uſually) others ſhall have ſuch deſertions as will make them ſmart for their ſweetneſſe, as was ſhewed before;

But, upon what occaſions doth a Chriſtian thinke eſpecially, that God doth leave, forſake and fayle him.

The heart ſinks

1.

When God appeares an enemy.

Iob. 7. 20.

Firſt, This fayling and fainting of the ſoule is ſometimes upon an apprehenſion, as if God and Chriſt were become enemies, as *Iob* ſaith, and as having ſet us as a but to ſhoot at, but this is not all that a gracious and pure heart ſinkes for.

2.

When Chriſts love is abſent and not felt.

Simile.

But alſo Secondly, For the abſence of Chriſts love, though it feele no anger. Even as to a loving Wife, her husband not looking lovingly upon her as he uſed to doe, is enough to caſt her downe and cauſe her ſpirits to fayle; ſo for God to looke upon the ſoule; put the caſe not with an angry, yet with a countenance withdrawne, it is ſufficient to caſt it down, for any one that hath dependance upon another to ſee their countenance withdrawne and not to ſhew their face

face as before, if there be but a ſweet diſpoſition in them it is enough to daunt and diſmay them.

Nay, Moreover when they find not that former aſſiſtance in holy dutyes, when they find that their hearts are ſhut up and they cannot pray as formerly when they had the Spirit of God more fully, and when they find that they cannot beare afflictions with wonted patience; certainely Chriſt hath withdrawne himſelfe; (ſay they) This is firſt done when we heare the word of God not with that delight and profit as we were wont, when they find how they come neere to God in holy communion and yet feele not that ſweet taſt and reliſh in the ordinances of God as they were wont to doe; they conclude certainely God hath hid his face, whereupon they are caſt downe, their ſpirits fayle. And doe not wonder that it ſhould be ſo, for it is ſo in nature; when the Sunne hides it ſelfe many dayes from the world it is an uncomfortable time, the ſpirits of the creatures lower and wither, we ſee it ſo in the body, that the animall ſpirits in the braine (which are the cauſe of motion and ſence) if they be obſtructed there followes an *Apoplexie* and deadneſſe. So it is betweene Chriſt and the ſoule, he is the *Sunne of Righteouſneſſe*, by whoſe beames wee are all comforted and cheared, which when they are withheld then our ſpirits decay and are diſcouraged. Summer and Winter ariſe from the preſence and abſence of the ſunne: what cauſeth the Spring to be ſo cloathed

3. *When they miſſe of former aſſiſtance in holy duties.*

Mal. 4. 2.

SERM. X.

cloathed with all those rich ornaments? the presence of the sunne which comes neerer then. So what makes the summer and winter in the soule but the absence or presence of Christ, what makes some so vigorous beyond others, but the presence of the Spirit? As it is in nature, so it is here, the presence of Christ is the cause of all spirituall life and vigour; who when hee withdrawes his presence a little the soule fayles.

My soule failed when hee spake to me, I sought him but I could not find him, I called but hee gave mee no answer.

Obser. The Church redoubleth her complaint to shew her passion, *A large heart hath large expressions*: shee tooke it to heart that Christ did not shew himselfe in mercy, therefore she never hath done, *I sought him but I could not find him; I called but he gave me no answer.*

Affection makes eloquent and large expressions,

Obser. But mainely observe from this fayling of the Church. *The difference betweene the true children of God and others.* The child of God is cast downe when he finds not the presence of God as he was wont, his spirits faile? A carnall man that never knew what this presence meant, regards it not, can abide the want of it, he finds indeed a presence of God in the creature which hee thinks not of, there is a sweetenesse in Meate, drinke, rest, and a contentment in honour, preferment, and riches; And thus God is present alwayes with him. But

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other presence hee cares not for. Nay, hee shunnes all other presence of God, labouring to avoid his spirituall presence. For what is the reason that a carnall man shunnes the applying of the word and the thinking of it, but because it brings God neere to his heart, and makes him present. What is the reason hee shunnes his owne conscience: that he is loath to heare the just and unanswerable accusations that it would charge upon him? but because he cannot abide the presence of God in his conscience. What is the reason hee shunnes the sight of holier and better men then himselfe? they present God to him being his image, and call his sinnes to memory, and upbraid his wicked life. Hence comes that satanicall hatred more then humane in carnall vile men, to those that are better then themselves: because they hate all presence of God; both in the word, ministery, and all Gods holy servants; all such presence of God they hate, whereof one maine reason is, because they are malefactors, wicked rebells, and intend to be so. And as a malefactor cannot endure so much as the thought of the judge, so they cannot thinke of God otherwise (in that course they are in) then of a judge, whereupon they tremble and quake at the very thought of him, and avoyd his presence. 1 King. 17. 18.

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guilty of the contrary vices: he quaked and could not endure to heare him speak any longer. Wicked men love not to be arraigned, tormented, accused and condemned before their time, therfore whatsoever presents to them their future terrible estate, they cannot abide it. It is an evidence of a man in a cursed condition, thus not to endure the presence of God: but what shall God and Christ say to them at the day of judgement? It was the desire of such men not to have to doe with the presence of God here, and it is just with Christ to answer them there as they answer him now, *Depart depart, we will have none of thy wayes* (say they) *depart ye cursed* (saith he) He doth but answer in their owne language, *Depart ye cursed with the Divell and his angells.*

Mark. 5 7.

Iob 22.17.

But you see the Child of God is cleane of another temper, he cannot be content to be without the presence of God and of his Spirit inlightning, quickning, strengthening and blessing of him in spirituall respects. When he finds not his presence helping him, when he finds Christ his life is absent from him, he is presently discouraged. For, *Christ is our life.* Now when a mans life fayles all fayles, when therefore a man finds his spirituall taste and comfort not as it was before, then oh, *the life of my life* hath withdrawne himselfe, and so is never quiet till he have recovered his life againe, for *Christ is his life.*

Col. 3.4.

Col. 3.4.

And becauſe there is a presence of God and

of

of Christ in the Word and Sacraments a sweet presence: the godly soule hee droopes and failes if he be kept from these, he will not excommunicate himselfe as many doe, that perhaps are asleepe when they should be at the ordinances of God; but if he be excommunicated and banished, O how takes he it to heart! *Psal.* 42. 1. *As the hart panteth after the water brookes, so longeth my soule after thee O God:* the whole 84. Psalme is to that purpose, *O how aymiable are thy Tabernacles O Lord of hosts?* He finds a presence of God in his word and sacraments, and when he doth not taste a sweet presence of God therein he droopes and sinks.

A carnall man never heedes these things because he finds no sweetnesse in them, but the godly finding Christ in them they droope in the want of them and cannot live without them, *Whither shall we goe* (saith *Peter* to Christ) *thou hast the words of eternall life,* I find my soule quickned with thy speaking. So a soule that feeles the quickning power of the ordinances, he will never be kept from the meanes of salvation, but he droopes and is never well till he have recovered himselfe againe. Ioh. 6. 68.

Againe another difference may be observed. Carnall men when they find the sence of Gods anger they seeke not Gods favour but thinke of worse and worse still, and so run from God till they be in hell. But those that are Gods children, when they faile and find the sence of Gods displeasure they are sencible of it, and give

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give not over seeking to God, they run not further and further from him.

The Church here though shee found not Christ present with her yet she seekes him still and never gives over.

Observ.

Whence againe we may observe, *That although the Church be said to faile and not to find Christ, yet he is present then with her.* For who inabled her to seeke him. To explaine this, there is a double presence of Christ.

That there is a double presence of Christ felt and not felt.

1. *Felt.*
2. *Not Felt.*

1. *His presence felt.*

The presence felt, is when Christ is graciously present and is withall pleased to let us know so much, which is a Heaven upon Earth: the soule is in Paradice then, when she feeles *the love of God shed abroad in the heart,* and the favourable countenance of God shining upon her, then she despiseth the world, the divell and all, and walkes as if she were halfe in Heaven already, for she finds a presence and a manifestation of it, a more glorious state then the world can afford.

2. *Christ unfelt secret presence.*

But, *There is a presence of Christ that is secret,* when he seemes to draw us one way, and to drive us another, that we are both driven and drawne at once: when he seemes to put us away and yet notwithstanding drawes us; when we find our soules goe to Christ, there is a drawing power and presence, but when we find him absent here is a driving away. As we see here in the Church and in the *Woeman of Canaan,* we see what an answer she had from Christ, at first

Mat. 15.

none.

none, and then an uncomfortable, and lastly a most unkind answer. *Wee must not give the childrens bread to doggs.* Christ seemed to drive her away, but at the same time he by his Spirit drawes her to him and was thereby secretly present in her heart to increase her faith. When Christ wrestled with *Iacob* though he contended with him, yet the same time he gave *Iacob* power to overcome him, to be *Israel* a prevailer over him: so at the same time the Church seemes to faile and faint, yet notwithstanding there is a secret drawing power pulling her to Christ, whereby she never gives over but seekes and calls still after him. Gen. 32.

It is good to observe this kind of Christs dealing, because it will keepe us that we be not discouraged when we find him absent. If still there be any grace left mooving us to that which is good, if we find the Spirit of God moving us to love the word and ordinances, to call upon him by prayer and to be more instant, certainely we may gather there is a hidden, secret presence here that drawes us to these things. Nay more: that the end of this seeming farsaking and strangenesse is to draw us neerer and neerer, and at length to draw us into heaven to himselfe. Gods people are gainers by all their losses, stronger by all their weakenesses, and the better for all their crosses whatsoever they are. And you shall find that the Spirit of God is more forceable in them after a strangenesse, to stir them up more eagerly after Christ then

SERM. X.

then before; as here the Church doth for her eagernesse, constancie and instantnesse it groweth as Christs withdrawing of himselfe groweth.

Vse.
How to judge of our selves in a dead liveleſſe estate both in regard of comfort and holy performances.

Let us therefore learne hence how to judge of our selves, if we be in a dead liveleſſe state, both in regard of comfort and of holy performances, whether we be content to be so. If we be not contented but make towards Christ more and more it is a good signe that he hath not forsaken us, that he will come againe more gloriously then ever before. As here we shall see after it was with the Church, he seemes strange but it is to draw the Church, to discover her affection and to make her ashamed of her former unkindnesse, and to sit surer and hold faster then she did before, all ends in a most sweet communion.

Vse. 2.
We should depend upon Christ in a seeming absence.

Wee should labour therefore to answer Christs dealing in sutable apprehensions of soule when he is thus present secretly, though he seeme in regard of some comforts and former experience of his love to withdraw himselfe, It should teach us, to depend upon him, and to beleeve though we feele not comfort, yea against comfort when we feele signes of displeasure. If he can love and support me, and strengthen my soule, and shew it a presence of that which is fit for me. Certainely I should answer thus with my faith, I will depend upon him (though he kill me) as *Iob* did; our soules should never give over seeking of Christ, praying

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ing and endeavouring, for there is true love where hee seemes to forsake and leave; therefore I ought in these desertions to cleave to him in life and in death.

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The end of the tenth Sermon.

7 AP 53

THE ELEVENTH SERMON.

CANT. V. VI. VII.

I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawne himselfe, and was gone: my soule failed when he spake, I sought him but could not find him, I called him but he gave mee no answer. &c.

THE pride and securitie of the Spouse provokes the Lord her husband oft to bring her very low, they being incompatible with Christs residence.

Pride is an affection contrarie to his prerogative, for it sets up somewhat in the soule higher then God the highest.

Securiry is a dull temper or rather diſtemper that makes the ſoule neglect her watch and rely upon ſome outward priviledge, where this ill couple is entertained, there Chriſt uſeth to withdraw himſelfe, even to the failing and fainting of the ſoule.

The Spouſe is here in her fainting fit yet ſhe ſeekes after Chriſt: ſtill ſhe gives not over, ſo Jonah. 2. *Ionas, I am caſt out of thy preſence* (ſaies hee) *yet notwithſtanding I will looke toward thy holy Temple.* And *David Pſal.* 31. 22. *I ſaid in my haſt I am caſt out of thy ſight, yet notwithſtanding thou heardeſt the voice of my prayer.* Hee ſaid it, but hee ſaid it in his haſte. Gods children are ſurprized on the ſudden to thinke they are caſtaway, but it is in haſte and ſo ſoone as may be they recover themſelves. *I ſaid it is my Infirmitie*, ſaid *David Pſal.* 73. It is but in a paſſion, here then is the difference betweene the children of God and others in deſertions, they ariſe, theſe lye ſtill and deſpaire. There Iſa. 13. is *life in the ſubſtance of the Oake* that makes it lift up its head above ground though it bee cut downe to the ſtumpes. Nay wee ſee further here the Church is not taken off for any diſcouragements, but her faith growes ſtronger, as Mat. 15. the *womans* of *Canaan* did.

1. The Reaſon whereof is, *Faith* lookes to the Promiſe and to the nature of God not to his preſent dealing.

2. And then God by a ſecret worke of his Spirit (though hee ſeeme to bee an enemy

yet

yet notwithstanding) drawes his children neerer and neerer to him by such his dealing. All this strangenesse is but to mortifie some former lust, or consume some former drogs of securitie.

I sought him but I could not find him.

Heere one of the greatest discouragements of all other is, when prayer (which is left to the Church as a salve for all sores) hath no answer. This is the complaint, but indeed an errour of the Church; for Christ did heare the Church though hee seemed to turne his backe.

But how shal we know that God heares our Prayers?

How to know that God hearcs our Prayers.

Amongst many other things this is one: when he gives us inward peace, then he heares our prayers, for so is the connexion. *Phil.*4.6.7.

If he therewith gives inward peace. Phil. 4.

Or secondly, If wee find a spirit to pray still, a spirit to waite and to hold out, it is an argument that God either hath or will heare those prayers.

2.

A spirit to hold out in prayer though without peace.

And as it is an argument that God heares our prayers, so is it of the presence of Christ; for how could wee pray but from his inward presence? Christ was now present, and more present with the Church when hee seemed not to be found of her, then hee was when she was secure, for whence else comes this *eagernesse of desire, this spirit of prayer, this earnestnesse of seeking.*

I called but hee gave me answer &c.

Directions how to carry our selves in such an

anestate. How ſhall we carry our ſelves when it falls out that our hearts faile of that we ſeek for, whē we pray without ſucces & find not a preſēt anſwer? or are in any ſuch like ſtate of deſertion.

Rom. 4. 1. *Wee muſt believe againſt beliefe* (as it were) *hope againſt hope, and truſt in God*, Howſoever hee ſhewes himſelfe to us as an oppoſite. It is no matter what his preſent dealing with his Church and children heere is, the nature of Faith is to breake through all oppoſition, to ſee the Sunnne behind a cloud, nay to ſee one contrary in another, life in death, a calme in a ſtorme *&c.*

2. Cor. 6. 2. *Labour for an abſolute dependancie upon Chriſt with a povertie of ſpirit in our ſelves*, this is the end of Chriſts withdrawing himſelfe, to purge us of ſelfe confidence and pride.

3. Stir up your graces, for as nature joyning with phiſicke helpes it to worke and carry away the malignant humours: ſo by the remainder of the Spirit that is in us, let us ſet all our graces on worke untill wee have carried away that that offends and clogs the ſoule, and not ſincke under the burthen, for this is a ſpeciall time for the exerciſing of faith, hope, love, diligence, care, watchfullneſſe, and ſuch like graces.

And let us know for our comfort, that evē this conflicting condition is a good eſtate. In a ſicke body it is a ſigne of life and health approaching when the humours are ſtirred, ſo as that a man complaines that the phiſicke workes. So when

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wee take to heart our preſent condition, though wee faile and find not what wee would, yet this will worke to the ſubduing of corruption at length. *It is a ſigne of future victorie when wee are diſcontent with our preſent ill eſtate.* Grace will get the upper hand, as nature doth when the humours are diſturbed.

4. Againe when wee are in ſuch a ſeeming forlorne eſtate, *Let us have recourſe to former experience.* What is the reaſon that God vouchſafes his children for the moſt part in the beginning of their converſion (in their firſt love) experience of his love to raviſhment? It is, that afterwards they may have recourſe to that love of God then felt to ſupport themſelves, and withall to ſtirre up endeavours, and hope; that finding it not ſo well with them now as formerly it hath binn, by comparing ſtate with ſtate, deſires may bee ſtirred up to bee as they were or rather better. Hoſe. 2 7

And as the remembrance of former experiences ſerve to excite endeavour, ſo to ſtirre up *Hope.* I hope it ſhall be as it was, becauſe God is Immutable. I change but Chriſt alters not, the inferiour elementary world changes, heere is faire weather and foule, but the Sunne keepes his perpetuall courſe; and as in the gloomieſt day that ever was there was light enough to make it day and to diſtinguiſh it from night, (though the Sunne did not ſhine) So in the moſt diſconſolate ſtate of a Chriſtian ſoule, there is light enough in the ſoule to ſhew that the *Sunne*

SERM. XI.

Psal. 112. 4.

of Righteousnesse is there, and that Christ hath shined upon the soule, that it is day with the soule and not night.

5. And learne when wee are in this condition to waite Gods leasure, for hee hath waited ours. It is for our good, to prepare us for furrther blessings, to mortifie and subdue our corruptions, to inlarge the capacity of the soule that the Lord absents himselfe, therefore *Bernard* saith well, *Tibi accidit* &c. *Christ comes and goes away for our good*, when hee withdrawes the sence of his love, the soule thereupon is stretched with desire, that it may bee as it was in former time, in the daies of old. Thus much for that, *I sought him but I could not find him, I called but hee gave me no answer.*

Object.

Matt. 7. 7.

Answ.

Heere wee must answer one objection before wee leave the words. *This seemes to contradict other Scriptures, which promise that those that seeke shall find.* It is true they that seeke shall find but not presently. Gods times are the best and fittest. They that seek shall find, if they seek constantly with their whole heart in all the meanes. Some doe not find, because they seeke in one meanes and not in another, they seeke Christ in reading and not in the ordinance of hearing, in private meditation, but not in the communion of Saints; wee must goe through all meanes to seeke Christ, not one must bee left. Thus if wee will seeke him, undoubtedly hee will make good his promise. Nay in some sort, *hee is found before hee is sought*, for hee is

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in our soules to stirre up desire of seeking him, hee prevents us with desires and answers us in some sort before wee pray, *when hee gives us a spirit of prayer, it is a pledge to us, that hee meanes to answer us.* Therefore it is a spirituall deceit when wee thinke Christ is not in us and wee are neglected of him, because wee have not all that wee would have. Among many other deceits that Christians deceive themselves with in this kind these be two.

Judging of grace by the quantity and not by the value 1. Pet. 1.

1. That they judge grace *by the quantity and not by the value and price of it*, whereas the least measure of grace and comfort is to be esteemed, because *it is an immortall seed* cast into the soule by an immortall God the *Father of Eternity*.

Judging of ourselves by sense and feeling.

2. Another deceit is, that Wee judge of our selves by sence and feeling and not by faith.

The watchmen that went about the citty found mee and smote me and tooke away my vaile from mee.

Heere the poore Church after the setting downe of her owne exercise in her disertion now sets out some outward ill dealing shee met with and that from those that should have beene her greatest comforters. *The watchmen that went about the citty found me, they wounded me, the keepers of the walls tooke away my vaile from me.*

Thus wee see how trouble followes trouble, *One depth calls upon another: Inward desertion and outward affliction goe many times tegeher.* The troubles of the Church many times are like

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like *Iobes* messengers they come fast one upon another, because God meanes to perfect the worke of Grace in their hearts, all this is for their good. *The sharper the winter the better the spring*, learne hence first of all therefore in generall.

Observ. *That, It is no easie thing to be a sound Christian.*

Wee see heere when the Church had betrothed her selfe to Christ and entertained him into her garden, there after she falls into a state of security and sleepe, whence Christ labours to rouse her up: then she useth him unkindely, after which hee withdrawes himselfe even so farre that *her heart failes her*; then (as if this were not enough) the watchmen that should have looked to her, *they smite her, wound her and take away her vaile.* See here the variety of the usage of the Church and changes of a Christian, not long in one state, hee is ebbing and flowing.

Therefore let none distaste the way of Godlinesse for this, that it is such a state as is subject to change and variety; whereas carnall men are upon their lees and find no changes.

Object. But you will say, *All Christians are not thus tossed up and downe, so deserted of God and persecuted of others.*

Answ. I answer, Indeed there is difference, Whence comes that difference? from Gods liberty; it is a misterie of the Sanctuarie, which no man in the world can give a reason of, why of Christians both equally beloved of God, Some should

ſhould have a fairer paſſage to Heaven; others rougher and more rugged; It is a myſterie hid in Gods breſt. It is ſufficient for us, if God will bring us any way to Heaven, as the bleſſed Apoſtle ſaith. *If by any meanes I might attaine to the reſurrection of the dead,* either through thicke or thinne, if God will bring me to Heaven it is no matter. *If I by any meanes.* Phil. 3. 11.

The Watchmen that went about the Citty ſmote mee, &c.

By the *Watchmen* heere are ment eſpecially Governours of State and Church.

Why are they called Watchmen.

It is a borrowed ſpeech taken from the cuſtome of Citties that are beleagered, for pollicies ſake they have watchmen to deſcry the danger they are liable unto, ſo Magiſtrates be watchmen of the State, Miniſters are the watchmen for Soules, watching over our Soules for good. Heb. 13. 17.

Why doth God uſe Watchmen. *Queſt.*

Not for any defect of power in him, but for demonſtration of his goodnes. for he is the great Watchman, who watcheth over our commonwealthes, Churches and perſons, he hath an eye that never ſleepes, *He that watcheth Iſrael neither ſlumbers nor ſleepes,* yet notwithſtanding hee hath ſubordinate Watchmen, not for defect of power, but for demonſtrotion of goodneſſe; hee manifeſts his goodnes in that he will uſe varietie of ſubordinate Watchers. *Anſw.* 1. Pſal. 124. 4.

And likewiſe to ſhew his power in uſing many inſtruments

instruments and his care for us when he keepes us together with his owne subordinate meanes.

And in this that God hath set over us Watchers (Ministers especially) It implyes that *our soules are in danger*, and indeed there is nothing in the world so beset as the soule of a poore Christian, who hath so many and so bad enemies as a Christian, and amongst them all, the worst and greatest enemie hee hath is neerest to him, and converseth daily with him, even himselfe. Therefore there must needs bee *Watchmen* to discover the deceits of Satan and his instruments, and of our owne hearts, to discover the dangers of *Hierusalem*, and the errours and sins of the times wherein wee live. The Church is in danger, for God hath set Watchmen, now God and nature doth nothing in vaine or needlessely.

Arguments shewing the pretiousnesse of the soule.

Againe in that God takes such care for the soule, it shewes the woundrous worth of it, many arguments there be to shew that the soule is a pretious thing, it was breathed by God at first, Christ gave his life to redeeme it, but this is an especiall one that God hath ordained and established a ministry and Watchmen ouer it. And as God hath set some men Watchmen over others, so hath hee appointed every man to bee a Watchman to himselfe. Hee hath given every man a citty to watch over, that is his owne estate and soule, therefore let us not depend altogether on the watching of others. *God hath planted a conscience in every of us*, and useth

useth as others to our good, so our owne care, wisdome, and foresight, these hee elevateth and sanctifieth.

The Watchmen that went about the citty found mee, they smote mee, they wounded mee, &c.

Come wee now to the carriage of these Watchmen, those that should have beene defensive prove most offensive. *How the Church was wounded by the Watchmen.*

They smote the Church and wounded her many wayes, (though it be not discovered heere in particular) as with their ill and scandolous life, and sometimes with *corrupt doctrine* and otherwhiles with bitter words, and their unjust *censures*, as wee see in the story of the Church, especially the *Romish Church*, they have excommunicated Churches and Princes: but not to speake of those Synagogues of Satan, come wee nearer home and wee may se amongst our selves sometimes those that are Watchmen and should be for encouragement, They smite and wound the Church, and take away her vaile. 1. 2. 3 Ioh. 9. 3 Ioh. 10.

What is it to take away the vaile.

You know in the times of *the Old Testament* a vaile was that which covered woemen for modestie, to shew their subjection, and it was likewise an honourable ornament, *They tooke away the vaile, that is* that wherewith the Church was covered, they tooke away that, that made the Church comely, and laid her open and as it were naked.

Now both these wayes, the Churches vaile is taken

SERM. XI.

taken away by falſe and naughty Watchmen.

They tooke away the vaile of her ſubjection.

1. As the *vaile* is a token of ſubjection, when by their falſe Doctrines, they labour to draw people from Chriſt, and their ſubjection to him.

The Church is Chriſts Spouſe, the vaile was a token of ſubjection, now they that draw the people to themſelves, as in Popiſh Churches, that deſire to ſit high in the conſciences of people, and ſo make the Church undutifull, *They take away the vaile of ſubjection*, and ſo force Chriſt to puniſh the Church, as wee ſee in former ages.

2. *The vaile of her honour and comelineſſe.*

2. As the vaile is for honour and comelineſſe, ſo *they take away the vaile of the Church*, when *they take away the credit and eſteeme of the Church*, when they lay open the infirmities and weakneſſes of the Church. This is ſtrange that the *Watchmen* ſhould do this, yet notwithſtanding oftentimes it falls out ſo that thoſe that by place are Watchmen, are the bittereſt enemies of the Church Who were bitterer enemies of the poore Church in Chriſts time then the *Scribes*, *Phariſes*, and *Prieſts*.

And ſo in the time of the *Prophets*, who were the greateſt enemies the Church had, but falſe *Prieſts*, and *Prophets*.

Queſt. *What is the ground of this, that thoſe men that by their ſtanding ſhould bee encouragers, are rather dampers of the Churches zeale in purſuit of it.*

Anſw. *Why the watchmen are the wonders of the Church.*

There are many grounds of it.

Sometimes it falls out from a ſpirit of envie

vie in them at the graces of Gods people which are wanting in themselves, they would not have others better then themselves.

Sometimes from Idlenesse which makes them hate all such as provoke them to paines: they raise up the dignity of outward things too much, as wee see in Poperie, they make every thing to conferre grace, as if they had a speciall vertue in them: but they neglect that wherewith God hath joyned an efficacie, his owne ordinances.

This should teach us, *To bee in love with Christs government*, and to see the vanity of all things heere below, though they bee never so excellent in their ordinance. Such is the poyson of mans heart, and the malice of Satan that they turne the edge of the best things against the good of the Church. *Vse.* 1.

What is more excellent then Magistracie, yet many times the point of the sword is directed the wrong way. *I have said ye are Gods. Psal.* 82.6. They should governe, as God himselfe would governe, and aske with themselves, would God now if hee were a Watchman of the state doe thus and thus, but I wish woefull experience did not witnesse the contrary.

So *Ministers* are *Christs Ambassadors* and should carry themselves even as Christ would do, they should strengthen the feeble knees and bind up the broken hearted, nor discourage and not sow pillowes under the armeholes of wicked and carnall men, but alas wee see the edge 2. Cor. 5.20. Ezek. 13.18.

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edge of the ordinance is oftentimes turned another way by the corrupt, proud, unbroken hearts of men and the malice of Satan.

Vse.2.

Againe, it should teach us, not to thinke the worse of any for the disgraces of the times. The Watchmen heere take away the vaile of the Church, and her forwardnesse is disgraced by them: take heed therefore wee entertaine not rash conceites of others, upon the entertainement they find abroad in the world, or among those that have a standing in the Church, for so wee shall condemne Christ himselfe, how was hee judged of the *Priests, Scribes,* and *Pharisees* in his times? and this hath beene the lot of the Church in all ages, the true members thereof were called Heretiques and Schismatickes, *the vaile was taken of.* It is the poysonfull pride of mans heart that when it cannot raise it selfe, by its owne worth, it will endeavour to raise it selfe by the ruine of others credit through lying slanders. The Divell was first a slanderer, and lyer, and then a murtherer, hee cannot murther without hee slander first, the credit of the Church must first bee taken away, and then shee is wounded, otherwise as it is a usuall proverbe, *Those that kill a dogge make the world believe, that he was mad first,* so they alwayes first traduced the Church to the world, and then persecuted her. *Truth hath alwayes a scratch't face.* Falshood many times goes under better habits then its owne which God suffers to exercise our skill and wis-

Ioh.8.

wiſdome that wee might not depend upon the raſh judgment of others, but might conſider what grounds they have; not what men doe or whom they oppoſe, but from what cauſe. Whether from a ſpirit of *Envie*, *Idleneſſe*, *Iealouſie*, and *Pride*, or from good grounds, elſe if Chriſt himſelfe were on earth againe, we ſhould condemne him, as now men do the generation of the juſt, whom they ſmite and wound and take away their *vaile* from them.

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The end of the eleventh Sermon.

THE TVVELFTH SERMON.

Cant. V. VII.

The Watchmen that went about the citty found me, they ſmote mee, they wounded me, the Keepers of the walls tooke away my vaile from me.

THE *Watchmen.* (Thoſe that by their place and ſtanding ſhould bee, ſoe) they ſmote the *Church* (as *Barnard* complaines, almoſt 500. yeares agoe) alas, alas ſaith he, thoſe that doe ſeek priviledges in the Church, are the firſt in perſecuting it and (as his faſhion is to ſpeake in a kinde of Rhetorick) they were not paſtors, but impoſters. There be two ordinances without which

SER. XII.

which the world cannot ſtand.

1. *Magiſtracie.*
2. *Miniſterie.*

Magiſtrates are nurſing Fathers and nurſing Mothers to the Church.

Miniſters are *Watchmen* by their place and ſtanding.

Now for Shepheards to become *wolves*, for Watchmen to become *ſmiters*, what a pitifull thing is it, but thus it is, the Church hath beene alwayes perſecuted with theſe men, under pretence of Religion, which is the ſharpeſt perſecution of all in the Church; it is a grievous thing to ſuffer of an enemy, but worſe of a country man, worſe then that of a friend, and worſt of all of the Church. Notwithſtanding (by the way) wee muſt know, that the perſecuted cauſe is not alway the beſt (as *Auſtine* was forced to ſpeake in his time againſt the *Donatiſts*) *Sarah* was a tipe of the true, and *Hagar* of the falſe Church. Now *Sarah* ſhe corrected *Hagar*, therefore it followes not, that the ſuffering cauſe is allway the better, therefore wee muſt judge of things in theſe kind of paſſages by the cauſe, and not by the outward carriage of things.

The perſecuted ſide is not allwayes the beſt.

They tooke away my vaile.

Queſt. *What ſhall wee doe in ſuch caſes, if wee ſuffer any indignity, if the vaile bee taken off.* That is if our ſhame, infirmities, and weakeneſſes, be laid open by falſe imputations.

Anſw. In this caſe, it is *the innocency of the Dove*, that

that is to be laboured for, and withall the wisdome of the Serpent. If Innocencie will not serve, labour for wisdome, as indeed it will not alone; the wicked would then labour for subtilty to disgrace righteous persons.

But what if that will not serve neither. Christ was wisdome it selfe, yet hee suffered most, when *Innocencie* and *wisdome* will not doe it (because we must be conformable to our head) *then wee must labour for patience*, knowing that one haire of our heads shall not fall to the ground without the providence of the Almighty. *Object.* *Answ.*

Commend our case, as Christ did, by faith and prayer to God that judgeth.

I charge you, oh Daughters of Hierusalem, if you see my Beloved, that you tell him, that I am sicke of Love &c.

Heere the Church, after her ill usage of the Watchmen, is forced to the society of other Christians, not so well acquainted with Christ as her selfe: *I charge yee O Daughters of Hierusalem, if you find my Beloved* &c. *Tell him* &c. What shall they *tell him*.

Tell him I am sicke of Love.

The *Church* is restles in her desire and pursuit after Christ, till shee find him, no opposition you see can take of her indeavour.

1. *Christ seemes to leave her* inwardly. 1.
2. *Then shee goeth to the Watchmen*, they *smite* and *wound* her. 2.
3. *Then she hath recourse to the Daughters of* 3.

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Hierusalem for helpe.

Generally before we come to the particulars, from the connexion, wee may obserue this.

Observ. *That, Loue is a fire kindled from Heauen.*

Can. 8.7. Nothing in the world will quench this Grace, no opposition, nay opposition rather whets and kindles endeavour.

How farre wee may bee sensible of injuries. The Church was nothing discouraged by the ill usageof the *Watchmen*, onely shee complaines she is not insensible. A Christian may without sinne be sensible of indignities, onely it must bee *the mourning of Doves, and not the roaring of Beares.* It must not bee murmuring and impatiencie, but a humble complaining to God, that hee may take our case to heart, as the Church doth heere: But as sensible as shee was, shee was not a whit discouraged, but seekes after Christ still in other meanes, if shee find him not in one, shee will try in an other: wee see heare the nature of loue, if it bee in any measure perfect, it casteth out all feare of discouragements.

Isa. 38.

The Nature of true Grace. And indeed, *It is the nature of true Grace to grow up with difficulties*, as the *Arke* rose higher with the waters, so likewise the soule growes higher and higher, it mounts up as discouragements and oppositions grow: Nay the soule takes vigour and strength from discouragements, as the wind increaseth the flame. So the Grace of God, the more the winds and waves of affliction oppose it, with so much the more violence, it breakes through all oppo-

sitions

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sitions, untill it attaine the desired hope.

To apply it, Those therefore that are soone discouraged, that pull in their hornes presently, it is a signe they are very cold, and have but little grace, for where there is any strength of holy affection, they will not be discouraged, nor their zeale be quenched, and damped. Therefore they subordinate Religion to their own ends, as your temporarie believers. Where is any love to Christ, the love of Christ is of a violent nature, it swaies in the heart, as the Apostle speakes, *The love of Christ constraineth us.*

A signe of coldnesse in Religion.

2. Cor. 5. 14.

If wee finde this inconquerable resolution in our selves, notwithstanding all discouragements, to goe on in a good cause, let us acknowledge that fire to bee from Heaven, let us not loose such an argument of the state of Grace, as suffering of afflictions with ioy. The more wee suffer, the more wee should rejoyce, if the cause be good, as the Apostles *Act.* 5. 41. rejoyced *that they were accounted worthy to suffer any thing.*

Use of incouragement and tryall.

I charge you, Oh Daughters of Hierusalem, if you find my Beloved, that ye tell him I am sicke of Love.

Shee goes to the *Daughters of Hierusalem* for helpe, whence wee may learne.

That, If wee find not comfort in one meanes, wee must have recourse to another.

Obser.

If wee finde not Christ present in one, seeke him in another, and perhaps wee shall finde

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him where wee least thought of him: sometimes there is more comfort in the society of poore Christians, then of the *Watchmen* themselves.

I charge you, O Daughters of Hierusalem, &c.

1. Where we have, 1. A Charge given.

2. 2. The parties Charged, *the Daughters of Hierusalem.*

3. 3. The particular thing they are Charged with, that is, (if they find Christ) *to tell him she is sicke of Love.*

The proportion betweene Hierusalem and the Church.

The parties Charged, are *the Daughters of Hierusalem*, the Daughters of the Church, which is called *Hierusalem*, from some resemblances betweene *Hierusalem* and the Church; some few shall bee touched, to give light to the point.

1. Psal. 122. 3. *Hierusalem was a Citty compact in it selfe*, (as the Psalmist saith) so is the Church, the body of Christ.

2. *Hierusalem* was chosen from all places of the world, to bee the seate of God, so the Church is the seate of Christ, hee dwells there in the hearts of his children.

3. Gal. 4 26. Pro. 15. 24. It is said of *Hierusalem*, they went up to *Hierusalem*, and downe to *Egypt*, and other places: So the Church is from above, *The way of wisdome is on high.* Religion is upward, Grace, Glory, and Comfort come from above, and draw our minds up to have our conversation, and our desires above.

4. *Hierusalem was the joy of the whole Earth;*

so

so the Church of God, what were the world without it, but a company of incarnate Divells.

In Hierusalem Records were kept of the names of all the cittizens there; so all the true citizens of the Church, their names are written in the booke of life in Heaven. Psal. 48. 3. 5. Heb. 12. 23.

The *Daughters of Hierusalem* therefore are the true members of the Church that are both bred and fed in the Church. Let us take a tryall of our selves, whether wee bee *Daughters of Hierusalem* or noe. That wee may make this tryall of our selves. 1 Pet. 1. 20. 1 Pet. 2, 2.

Observ. *How to know that wee are Daughters of Hierusalem.* Gal. 4 26.

1. *If we find freedome in our conscience from terrors and feares.* If wee find spirituall liberty and freedome to serve God, it is a signe that wee are *Daughters of Hierusalem*, because *Hierusalem* was free.

2. Or if wee mind things above, and things of the Church, if wee take to heart the cause of the truth, it is a signe wee are true *Daughters of Hierusalem*. Wee know what the *Psalmist* saith, *Let my right hand forget her cunning, if I forget thee O Hierusalem, if I doe not preferre Hierusalem before my chiefe joy*. If the cause of the Church goe to our hearts, if we can joy in the Churches joy, and mourne in the Churches abasement and suffering, it is a signe wee are true *Daughters of Hierusalem* and lively members of the body of Christ. Otherwise, when wee heare that the Church goes downe, and that the adverse part prevailes, and we joy, it is a signe wee are daughters of *Babylon* and not of *Hierusalem*. Psal. 137. 5. 6.

Therefore

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Therefore let us aske our affections what we are, as *Austine* writes excellently in his booke *de Civitate Dei*, aske thy heart of what citty thou art.

But what saith the Church to the *Daughters of Hierusalem* in the first place.

I Charge you.

It is a kinde of admiration supplied thus, I charge you as you love mee your sister, as you love Christ, as you tender my case, that am thus used, as you will make it good that you are *Daughters of Hierusalem* and not of *Babylon*, *tell my Beloved, that I am sicke of Love.* It is a strong charge, a defective speech, which yeelds us this observation.

Observe

That true Affections are serious in the things of God and of Religion.

Shee layes a waight upon them, *I charge you O Daughters of Hierusalem.* True impressions have strong expressions. Therefore are wee cold in matters of Religion in our discourses, it is because wee want these inward impressions. The Church heere was full, shee could not containe her selfe, in regard of the largenesse of her affections. *I charge you O Daughters of Hierusalem.* &c.

A signe of unbeliefe and coldnesse.

Wee may find the truth of Grace in the heart, by the discoveries and expressions in the conversation in generall.

I charge you, O Daughters of Hierusalem, if you find my Beloved, that ye tell him, I am sicke of Love.

The Church heere speakes to others, meaner ther-

then her ſelfe, ſhee would have the Church tell Chriſt, (by *Prayer*, the ſureſt intelligencer) how ſhee was uſed, how ſhe languiſhed, and was ſicke for him, and cannot bee without him.

Why did not the Church tell Chriſt her ſelfe. *Queſt.*

Soe ſhee did as well as ſhee could, but ſhee deſired the helpe of the Church this way alſo. Sometimes it is ſo with the Children of God that they cannot pray ſo well as they ſhould, and as they would doe, becauſe the waters of the ſoule are ſo troubled, that they can doe nothing but utter groanes and ſighes, eſpecially in a ſtate of deſertion, as *Hezekiah* could but chatter, and *Moſes* could not utter a word at the red ſea though hee did ſtrive in his ſpirit, in ſuch caſes they muſt bee beholding to the helpe of others. *Anſw.*

Sometimes a man is in body ſicke, (as *Iames* ſaith) *If any man bee ſicke let him ſend for the Elders, and let them pray:* There may bee ſuch diſtemper of bodie and ſoule, that wee are unfit to lay open our eſtate to our owne content. It is oft ſoe with the beſt of Gods Children, not that God doth not reſpect thoſe broken ſighes and deſires, but they give not content to the ſoule. The poore palſie man in the Goſpell not able to goe himſelfe was carried on the ſhoulders of others, and let thorough the houſe to Chriſt: oft times wee may bee in ſuch a palſie eſtate, that wee cannot bring our ſelves to Chriſt, but we muſt be content to bee borne Iam. 5. 14. Mar. 2. 3,3.

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borne to him by others.

I charge you O Daughters of Hierusalem that yee tell my Beloved, I am ſicke of Love.

Whence the poin t, tha t Ideſie you would obſerve is.

Obſerv. *That at ſuch times as wee find not our ſpirits inlarged from any cauſe outward and inward to comfort and joy, then is a time to deſire the prayers and helpe of others.*

It is good to have a ſtocke going every where, and thoſe thrive the beſt, that have moſt prayers made for them, have a ſtocke going in every country, this is the happines of the Saints. To inforce this inſtruction, to deſire the prayers of others, we muſt diſcover, that there is a wondrous force in the prayers of Chriſtians one for another. It is more then a complement, would it were thought ſo.

The great Apoſtle *Paul*, ſe how he deſires the *Romanes*, that they would ſtrive, and contend with God after a holy violence, by their joynt prayers for him, ſo hee deſires the *Theſſalonians*, that they would pray for him, *That hee might be delivered from unreaſonable men.* It is uſuall with him to ſay *Pray*, *Pray*, and for us too, for ſuch are gratious in the Court of Heaven. Deſpiſe none in this caſe, a true downe right experienced Chriſtians prayers are of much eſteeme with God. Our bleſſed Saviour himſelfe, when hee was to goe into the garden, though his poore Diſciples were ſleepie, and very untoward, yet hee would have their ſociety, and prayers.

Rom. 15. 20.

2. Theſ. 3, 2.

Mat. 26.

I

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I charge you O Daughters of Hierusalem, if you find my Beloved, that ye tell him, I am ſicke of Love.

To ſpeake a little of the matter of the charge, *I am ſicke of Love*, I love him, becauſe J have found former comfort, ſtrength and ſweetneſſe from him, that I cannot bee without him. To bee Love ſicke then in the preſence of the Church, is to have ſtrong affections to Chriſt, from which comes wondrous diſquietneſſe of ſpirit in his abſence, heere is ſomewhat good, and ſomewhat ill. This is firſt her vertue, that ſhee did fervently love, this was her infirmity, that ſhee was ſo much diſtempered with her preſent want, theſe two breedes this ſickneſſe of love, whence wee obſerve,

Love ſicke what.

Where the thing loved is not preſent anſwerable to the deſires of the ſoule that loves, There followes diſquiet and diſtemper of affections: that is heere termined ſicknes of Love.

The Reaſon heereof is, *Naturall contentment is in union with the thing Loved.* The more excellent the thing is that is loved, the more contentment there is in communion with it, and where it is in any degree or meaſure hindred there is diſquiet: anſwerable to the contentment in injoying, is the griefe, ſorrow, and ſickneſſe in parting. The happineſſe of the Church conſiſting in ſociety with Chriſt, therefore it is her miſery and ſickneſſe, to be deprived of him, not to enjoy him whom her ſoule ſo dearely loveth. There are few in the world,

ſicke

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ſicke of this diſeaſe, I would there were more ſicke of the love of Chriſt; there are many that ſurfit rather of fullneſſe, who thinke wee have too much of this *Manna*, of this preaching, of this Goſpell, there is too much of this knowledge, of the ordinances, theſe are not ſicke of love.

Vſe. Make a Uſe therefore of Tryall, whether we bee in the ſtate of the Church or no, *by valuing and prizing the preſence of Chriſt in his Ordinances*, the *Word* and *Sacraments*.

There are many fond ſickneſſes in the world, there is *Ammons* ſickneſſe, that was ſicke of love for his Siſter *Thamar*, his countenance diſcovered it, and *Ahab* hee is ſicke in deſiring his Neighbours vineyard, you have many ſtrange ſickneſſes: many ſicke with fires kindled from the fleſh, from Hell, but few ſicke of this ſickneſſe heere ſpoken of.

2. Sam 13. 2.

1. King. 21. 4.

1. If wee find our ſelves carried to Chriſt, to runne in that ſtreame as ſtrong as the affections of thoſe that are diſtempered with ſickneſſe of the love of other things, it will diſcover to us whether wee bee truely *Love ſicke* or not.

2. Take a man that is ſicke for any earthly thing, whether of *Ahabs* or *Amons ſickneſſe*, or of any thing, take it as you will, *That which the ſoule is ſicke of in love, it thinkes of daily*: it dreames of it in the night. What doe our ſoules therefore thinke of? what doe our meditations runne after. When wee are in our adviſed and beſt thoughts, what doe wee moſt thinke

thinke off? if of Chriſt, of the ſtate of the Church heere, of Grace and Glory all is well, what makes us in the midſt of all worldly diſcontentments to thinke all dung and droſſe in compariſon of Chriſt, but this ſickneſſe of love to Chriſt, if our love bee in ſuch a degree, as it makes us ſick of it, it makes us not to heare what wee heare, not to ſee, what wee ſee, not to regard what is preſent: the ſoule is in a kind of extaſie, it is carried ſo ſtrongly and taken up with things of Heaven, it is deaded to other things, when our eyes are no more led with vanity, then if wee had none, and the fleſh is ſo mortified, as if wee were dead men, by reaſon of the ſtrength of our affections that runne another way to better things which are above.

Thus wee ſee it is in *love*: Talke with a man that is in any heate of affections, you talke with one that is not at home, you talke with one abſent, *The ſoule is more where it loves, then where it dwells.* Surely where love is in any ſtrength, it drawes up the ſoule, ſo that a man oft times in his calling and ordinarie imployments doth not heed them, but paſſeth thorough the world as a man at randome, he regards not the things of the world, for Chriſt is gotten into his heart and drawes all the affections to himſelfe. Where the affection of love is ſtrong, it cares not what it ſuffers for the party loved, nay it glories in it. As it is ſaid of the *Diſciples*, when they were whipped, and ſcourged for preach- 3. Act. 5. 41.

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ing the Goſpell, it was a matter of Glory to them. *It is not labour, but favour*: it is not labour and vexation, but favour that is taken where love is to the party loved, where the love of Chriſt is (which was heere in the Church) labour is no labour, ſuffering is no ſuffering, trouble is no trouble.

4. Againe, *It is the property of the party that is ſicke of this diſeaſe to take little contentment in other things.* Tell a covetous worldling that is in love with the world a diſcourſe of learning, what cares hee for learning; tell him of a good bargaine, of a matter of gaine, and hee will hearken to that. So it is with the ſoule that hath felt the love of Chriſt ſhed abroad in the heart, tell him of the world, (eſpecially if he want that which hee deſires, the peace and ſtrength that hee found from Chriſt in former times) hee reliſheth not your diſcourſe.

Labour wee therefore every day more and more to have larger and larger affections to Chriſt. The ſoule that loves Chriſt, the nearer to Chriſt the more joyfull it is, when he thinkes of thoſe mutuall embracings when Chriſt and his ſoule ſhall meete together there: this happineſſe is there, where the ſoule enjoyes the thing loved, but that is not heere, but in Heaven Therefore in the meane time with joy hee thankfully frequents the places where Chriſt is preſent in the Word and Sacrament, and that we may come to have this affection.

Let us ſee what our ſoules are without him

meere

meere dungeons of darkeneſſe and confuſion, nothing comming from us that is good, this will breed love to the Ordinances, and then we ſhall relliſh Chriſt, both in the *Word* and *Sacrament*, for he is food for the hungry ſoule, and requires nothing of us but good appetites; and this will make us deſire his love and preſence.

* * *

The end of the twelfth Sermon.

Y THE

THE THIRTEENTH SERMON.

Cant. V. VIII. IX.

I charge you O daughters of Jerusalem if yee find my Beloved that ye tell him I am ſicke of love.

What is thy Beloved more then another Beloved O thou faireſt among woemen, &c.

THe ſoule as it is of an immortall ſubſtance, ſo in the right and true temper thereof, aſpireth towards immortality, unleſſe when it is clouded and overpreſt with that *which preſſeth downewards, and the ſin which hangeth ſo faſt on* (as the Apoſtle ſpeakes) Heb. 12. 1.

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ſpeakes) which is the reaſon of thoſe many and divers toſſings and turmoylings of the inlightned ſoule, now up now downe, now running amaine homewards and now againe ſluggiſh, idle and laſie, untill rowſed up by extraordinary meanes it puts on againe; as the fire mounteth upwards unto its proper place, and as the needle ſtill trembleth till it ſtand at the *North*, ſo the ſoule once inflamed with an heavenly fire, and acquainted with her firſt originall, cannot be at reſt untill it find it ſelfe in that comfortable way which certainely leads homewards.

Simile.

An inſtance whereof we have in the Church heere, who having loſt her ſweet communion with Chriſt, and ſo paid dearly for her former neglect and ſlighting his kind invitations, (as being troubled, reſtleſſe in mind, *beaten and wounded by the watch-men*, bereft of her vaile, *&c.*) Yet this heavenly fire of the bleſſed ſpirit, this *water of life* ſo reſtleſly ſpringing in her, makes her *ſickneſſe of love* and ardent deſire after Chriſt to be ſuch, that ſhe cannot containe her ſelfe, but breakes forth in this paſſionate charge and requeſt,

John. 4.

I charge you O daughters of Ieruſalem if ye find my Beloved that ye tell him, I am ſicke of love.

Thus we may ſee that the way to Heaven is full of changes, the ſtrength of corruption overclouds many times and damps our joyes. How many ſeverall tempers hath the Church beene in? Sometimes ſhe is all compounded of joy vehemently deſiring kiſſes of her beſt beloved, ſhe

ſhe holds her beloved faſt and will not let him goe, and ſometimes againe ſhe is gone, hath loſt her beloved, is in a ſea of troubles, ſeekes and cannot find him, becomes ſluggiſh, negligent, overtaken with ſelfelove, after which when ſhe hath ſmarted for her omiſſions (as here againe) ſhe is all a fire after Chriſt (as we ſay) no ground will hold her, away ſhe flies after him, and is reſtleſſe untill ſhe finde him, where by the way we ſee, *That permanency and ſtability is for the life to to come; here our portion is to expect changes, ſtorms and tempeſts*, therefore they muſt not be ſtrange to particuler perſons, ſince it is the portion of the whole Church, which thus by ſuffe-rings and conformity to the head muſt enter into glory, whiles God makes his power perfect in our weakeneſſe, overcomes Satan by unlikely meanes and ſo gets himſelfe the glory, even out of our greateſt infirmities, temptations and abaſements. 2 Cor. 4. 17. 2 Cor. 12. 9.

But God though he make all things worke for good unto his children, even the Divell, ſinne and death, deſertions, afflictions and all, yet wee muſt be warned hereby not to tempt God, by neglecting the meanes appointed for our comfortable paſſage: but open to Chriſt when he knockes, imbrace him joyfully in his ordinances, and let our hearts flie open unto him. For though (through his Mercy) our wounds be cured; yet who would be wounded to try ſuch dangerous experiments, as here befell the Church in her deſertions, for her ſluggiſh Rom. 8. 28.

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Rom. 8. 28.

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negligence, deadneſſe and ſelfe-love.

So that we ſee there is nothing gotten by favouring our ſelves in carnall liberty, ſecurity, or by yeelding to the fleſh. The Church ſtood upon tearmes with Chriſt when he would have come in to her, but what enſued hereupon? ſhe fell into a grievous deſertion, and not onely ſo but findes very hard uſage abroad, all which ſhee might have prevented by watchfulneſſe, carefulneſſe and opening to Chriſt knocking. It is a ſpirituall error to which we are all prone, to thinke that much is gained by favouring our ſelves, but we ſhall finde it otherwiſe: ſee here againe that God will beare with nothing though in his owne, but he will ſharpely puniſh them even for omiſſions, and that not only with deſertion, but ſometimes they ſhall meete with oppoſitions in the world.

1 Sam. 1. *David* cannot ſcape with a proud thought in numbring of the people, but he muſt ſmart for it and his people alſo. God is wonderous carefull of his Children to correct them, when he lets ſtrangers alone. It is a ſigne of love when he is at this coſt with us. And it ſhould tie us to be carefull of our behaviour, not to preſume upon Gods indulgence, for the neerer we are to him the more carefull he is over us, *he will be ſanctified in all that come neere him*, we ſee the *Corinthians* becauſe they came unreverently to the Lords table, (though otherwiſe they were holy men) *ſome of them are ſicke, ſome weake, others ſleep, that they might not be condemned with the world.*

Amos 3. 2.

Levit. 10 3.

1 Cor. 11.

Let

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Let none therefore thinke the profession of Religion to imply an immunity, but rather a straighter bond; for, *Iudgement begins at the house of God*, whatsoever he suffers abroad he will not suffer disorders in his owne house, as the Prophet saies, *You onely have I knowne of all the families of the earth, therefore you shall not goe unpunished.* The Church is neere him, his spouse whom he loveth, and therefore he will correct her, not induring any abatement, or decay of the first love in her. And for this very cause hee threatneth the Church of *Ephesus, to remoove her candlesticke.*

Amos. 3. 2.

Rev. 2.

To proceed, the poore Church here is not discouraged, but discovers and empties her selfe to the *daughters of Ierusalem*, as it is the nature of Culinary fire not onely to mount upwards, but also to bewray it selfe by light and heat, so of this heavenly fire when it is once kindled from above, not onely to aspire in its motion but to discover it selfe in affecting others with its qualities, it could not containe it selfe here in the Church but that she must goe to the *daughters of Ierusalem, I charge you O daughters of Ierusalem, if yee finde my Beloved that yee tell him that I am sicke of love.* Therefore they may doubt that they have not this heavenly fire kindled in them, that expresse it not seriously, for of all affections it will not be concealed. *David* wonders at his owne love, *Oh how I love thy law, oh how aimeable are thy Tabernacles?*

Simile.

Psal. 119.

A love sicke soule stands not upon tearmes.

Againe we see here, *that where the soule is sicke of*

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of love, it ſtands not upon any tearmes, but it humbleth and abaſeth it ſelfe. We ſay that affection ſtands not with Majeſty, therefore Chriſts love to us mooved him to abaſe himſelfe in taking our nature that he might be one with us, love ſtood not upon tearmes of greatneſſe, we ſee the Church goes to thoſe that were meaner proficients in religion then her ſelfe, to powre out her ſpirit to them, *to the daughters of Ieruſalem,* ſhe abaſeth her ſelfe to any ſervice, love endureth all things, any thing to attaine to the thing loved, as we ſee *Hamor* the ſonne of *Shichem* he would indure painefull circumciſion for the love he bore to *Dinah.* So *Acts.*5.41. it is ſaid they went away rejoycing after they were whipped, becauſe they loved Chriſt. The ſpirit of love made them rejoyce when they were moſt diſgracefully uſed.

1 Theſ. 2. 3. 1 Cor. 13.

Gen. 34. 24.

Acts. 6.

That this ſickneſſe of divine love works alſo upon the body. Pſal. 32. 3.

Sometimes where this affection of heavenly love is prevalent, ſo that a man is ſicke of it, the diſtempers thereof redounds to the body and reflects upon that, as we ſee in *David, Pſal.* 32.4. *That his moyſture became as the drought of ſummer,* becauſe there is a marriage and a ſimpathy betweene the ſoule and the body, wherein the exceſſive affections of the one redound and reflect upon the other.

Math 5. 6.

Tell him that I am ſicke of love, here is a ſicknes but not unto death but unto life, a ſickneſſe that never ends but in comfort & ſatisfaction, bleſſed are thoſe that hunger and thirſt after Chriſt, they ſhall be ſatisfied, as we ſhall ſee afterwards more at large.

Knowledge

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Knowledge gives not the denomination, *for we may know ill and be good, and we may know good and be evill*, but it is the affection of the ſoule which cleaves to the things known, the truth of our love is that gives the denomination of a ſtate to be good or ill, love is the weight and wing of the ſoule, which carries it where it goes, which if it carry us to earth we are baſe and earthly, if to heaven, heavenly, we ſhould have eſpeciall care how we fixe this affection; for thereafter as it is, even ſo is our conditiō, *Aske thy love of what City thou art whether of Ieruſalem or of Babylon*, (as *Auſtin* ſaith) Now the daughters of Jeruſalem reply unto the Church wondering at her earneſtneſſe.

It is not our knowledge that makes us good or evill, but goodneſſe loved and cleaved to makes us to be ſo.

What is thy Beloved more then another Beloved, O thou faireſt among woemen, what is thy Beloved more then another Beloved that thou doſt ſo charge us:

In ſteed of giving ſatisfaction to her they reply with asking new Queſtions, *What is thy Beloved more then another Beloved, O thou faireſt among woemen? what is thy Beloved*, &c. Wherein ye have a doubling of the Queſtion, to ſhew the ſeriouſneſſe of it, of this their anſwer there are two parts.

1. *A loving and ſweet Compellation, O thou faireſt among woemen.*

2. *The Queſtion doubled, what is thy Beloved more then another Beloved.* And againe, *What is thy Beloved*, &c. that thou doſt ſo charge us, as if they ſhould ſay, *Thou layeſt a ſerious charge upon us, therefore there is ſome great matter ſurely in thy Beloved that thou makeſt ſuch inquiry after him.*

Thus

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Thus the weaker Christians being stirred up by the example of the stronger, they make this Question and are thus inquisitive, but to speake of them in their order.

O thou fairest among woemen, here is the compellation, the Church is the fairest among woemen in the judgement of Christ, so he calls her, *Cant.* 1.8. *O thou fairest among woemen*, and here the fellow members of the Church tearme her so too, *faire* and the *fairest*, incomparably *faire*.

Quest. *But how commeth shee to be thus faire?*

Answ. *It is in regard that shee is cloathed with Christs robes*, *Rev.* 12. there is a woeman mentioned clothed with the Sunne, we were all ennobled with the image of God at the first, but after we had sinned we were bereft of that image, therefore now all our beauty must be clothing, which is not naturall to man but artificiall, fetched from other things, our beauty now is borrowed, it is not connaturall with us, the beauty of the Church now comes from the head of the Church Christ, she shines in the beames of her husband: not onely in Justification, but in Sanctification also.

1. *The Church is faire in regard she is cloathed with Christ.*

2. *In regard of the graces she hath from Christ she shines.*

The Church is lovely and faire againe, as from Christs imputative righteousnesse, so from his righteousnesse inherent in her, the graces she hath from him: for of him, wee receive Grace for Grace, there is never a grace but it is beautifull and faire: for what is grace but the beames of Christ the Sonne of Righteousnesse, so that all must be faire that comes from the first faire, all

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all beautifull that comes from the first beauty.

This beauty of grace whereby it makes the Church so faire springs from these grounds.

First, *In that it is from a divine principle and originall, it is not basely bred but from Heaven,* and therefore it raiseth the soule above nature and makes the subjects wherein it is as farre surpasse all other men as men doe beasts. 1.

Secondly, In regard of the continuance, it is everlasting and makes us continue for ever. *All flesh is grasse, and as the flower of grasse* (saith the Prophet,) and it is repeated in the New Testament in divers places. All worldly excellencie is as the flower of grasse: *the grasse withereth and the flower fadeth, but the word of the Lord,* (that is the grace that is imprinted in the soule by the Spirit with the word) *that abideth for ever,* and makes us abide likewise. 2. Isay. 40. 6. 1 Pet. 1. 24.

From this faireneſſe of the Church let us take occasion to contemplate of the excellency of Christ that puts this lustre of beauty upon the Church. *Moses* married a woeman that was not beautifull, but could not alter the complection and condition of his spouse. But Christ doth, he takes us wallowing in our bloud, deformed and defiled, he is such a husband as can put his Church into his owne disposition and transforme her into his owne proportion. He is such a *Head* as can quicken his members, such a roote as instills life into all his branches; such a foundation as makes us living stones, there is a vertue and power in this husband above all. *Vse.* *That Christ is the most excellent husband.*

But

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Object.

Anſw.

1.

In what regard the Church calls her ſelfe blacke.

2.

1 Cor. 5.

3.

How the Churches ſtate in this life comes to be ſo full of ſcandalls.

4.

Eccleſ. 9, 2.

5.

John. 1. 11.

Vſe. 1.

Oppoſe Iudgement to Iudgement.

But ſhee is blacke?

She is ſo indeed and ſhe confeſſeth her ſelfe to be ſo, *Cant.* 1. 5. I am blacke but comely, blacke in regard of the afflictions and perſecutions of others ſhee meets with in this world.

Blacke againe, *In regard of ſcandalls*, for the Divell hates the Church more then all ſocieties in the world, therefore in the ſociety of the Church there are often more ſcandalls then in other people, as the Apoſtle tells the *Corinthians*, there was inceſt amongſt them the like was not among the heathen.

She is blacke *through the envie of the world that lookes more at the Churches faults then vertues.*

The Church is blacke and unlovely nothing differing from others, In regard of Gods outward dealing. *All falls alike to all*, they are ſicke and deformed, they have all things outwardly whatſoever is common with others.

Laſtly and principally ſhe is blacke, *In reſpect of her Infirmities and weakeneſſes*, ſubject to weakeneſſe and paſſions as other men, the beauty of the Church is inward and undiſcerned to the carnall eye altogether: the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* ſee no vertue in Chriſt himſelfe. It is ſaid, *that he came among his owne, and his owne could not diſcerne of him: the darkeneſſe could not comprehend that light.* Now as it was with Chriſt, ſo it is much more with the Church, let this then be the uſe of it.

Oppoſe this ſtate of the Church to the falſe judgement of the world: they ſee all blacke and nothing elſe

elſe that is good; Chriſt ſees that which is black too: but then his ſpirit in them (together with the ſight of their blackneſſe) ſeeth their beauty too. *I am blacke but comely*,&c. Be not diſcouraged therefore at the cenſure of the world, blind men cannot judge of colours. It is ſaid of Chriſt, *hee had no forme or beauty in him, when wee ſhall ſee him.* 1. Not in outward glory, nor in the view of the world. If we be therefore thought to be blacke, wee are no otherwiſe thought of then the Church and Chriſt hath beene before us. Iſa. 53.

Againe, Let us make this Uſe of it, *againſt Sathan in the time of temptation,* doth Chriſt thinke us faire for the good we have, doth he not altogether valew us by our ill? and ſhall we beleeve Sathan, who joynes with the diſtempers of melancholly, or weakeneſſe wee are in, which he uſeth as a weapon againſt the ſoule, to make us thinke otherwiſe, *Sathan is not onely a murtherer, but a lyer from the beginning.* We muſt not beleeve an enemy, and a lyer withall. But conſider how Chriſt and the Church judgeth, that have better diſcerning. *And let us beware wee be not ſathans to our ſelves:* For if there were no Divell, yet in the time of temptation and deſertion we are ſubject to diſcouragement, to give falſe witneſſe againſt our ſelves, we are apt to looke on the darkeſide of the Cloud. The Cloud that went before the *Iſraelites* had a double aſpect, one darke, the other light; In temptation wee looke on the darke

Uſe. 3. *To remember Chriſts judgement of the Church when we are under temptation.*

Exod. 14. 20.

Simile.

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darke ſide of the ſoule, and are witty in pleading againſt our ſelves. Oh but conſider what Chriſt judgeth of us, *O thou faireſt among woemen*, and what thoſe about us that are learned, who can reade our evidences better then we our ſelves, doe judge of us, let us truſt the judgement of others in time of temptation more then our owne.

Vſe. 3. To ſee the bitterneſſe of their ſpirits that can or will ſee no good in Gods Children. Simile.

Learne againe here, *What to judge of the ſpirits of ſuch kinde of men, as are all in diſgracing and defacing the poore Church*, their table talke is of the infirmities of Chriſtians, they light upon them as flies doe upon ſore places, and will ſee nothing that is good in them, O where is the ſpirit of Chriſt, or of the Church of Chriſt in them that thus beſcratch the face of the Church? when yet (oft times) their hearts tell them theſe poore deſpiſed ones will be better then themſelves one day, for grace ſhall have the upper hand of all excellencies.

That all other excellencies ſave grace are but painted excellencies.

The Church is *faire* and *faireſt*, Grace is a tranſcendent good, all the excellency of civility and morallity is nothing to this, this denominates *the Church the faireſt*, ſhee is not guilt, but pure gold, not painted, but hath a true naturall complection, all other excellencies are but guilt, painted excellencies. *The whore of Babylon* ſhee is wonderous faire. But wherein doth her beauty conſiſt? In ornaments and ceremonies to abuſe ſilly people, that goe no further then fancy, it is an excellency that comes not to the judgement, but the excellencie

of

of the Church is otherwiſe, ſhe is *The faireſt among woemen*, ſhe hath a naturall faireneſſe, as gold is pure gold, ſo the Church is of a pure compoſition, glorious within. It is for the falſe whoriſh Church to be glorious without only, but the true Church is glorious within. But that which wee ſhould eſpecially obſerve is, *That wee ſhould labour to anſwer this commendation, not onely to be faire but the faireſt, to be tranſcendently ſingularly good, to doe ſomewhat more then others can, to have ſomewhat more in us then others have.* *Obſerv.*

For it is anſwerable to the ſtate of a Chriſtian, is a Chriſtian in an excellent ranke above other men? let him ſhew it by a carriage more gracious, more fruitfull and plentifull in good workes. There is a kinde of excellency affected in other things, much more ſhould we deſire to be excellent in that that is good, that we may not be *faire* onely but the *faireſt*. This the Apoſtle S. *Paul* excellently preſſeth to *Titus* his ſcholler, *Tit.* 2. 14. and to all of us in other places, that we ſhould be, *A peculiar people Zealous of good workes*: not onely to doe them, but to be zealous of them, and to goe before others in them, ſtanding as ſtanderbearers. Therefore thoſe that thinke they may goe too farre in Religion, that they may be too fruitfull, are not worthy the name of the ſpouſe of Chriſt, for ſhe is faire, yea the faireſt among woemen: *The righteous is more excellent then his neighbour*, therefore we ſhould excell in good workes (as the

That this ſtrife for eminency in Grace is ſutable to a Chriſtians calling.

That it is a ſinfull ſluggiſh feare to feare to be religious.

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1 Cor. 12 31. 2 Pet 1.8.

the Apoſtle exhorts us) *to labour after things that are excellent*, as if he ſhould ſay, Is there any thing better then other, labour for that. You have ſome ſo farre from this diſpoſition, that they cry downe the excellencies of others, leaſt the faireneſſe of others might diſcover their blackeneſſe. Thus we leave the *Compellation* and come to the *Queſtion*.

Queſt. *What is thy Beloved more then another Beloved?* and they double it, *what is thy Beloved more then another Beloved that thou ſo chargeſt us?*

Queſtions are of divers natures, we ſhall not ſtand upon them, this is not a *Queſtion* meerely of ignorance (for they had ſome knowledge of Chriſt, though weake) Nor was it a curious nor a catching Queſtion, like thoſe of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* unto Chriſt, to inſtance in that of

Joh. 18. 38. *Pilate, What is truth?* when Chriſt had told him the *truth*, *What is truth*, (ſaith he) in a ſcornfull prophane manner, as indeed prophane ſpirits cannot heare ſavoury words, but they turne them off with ſcorne, what is truth? This here in the text is not ſuch, but a Queſtion tending to further reſolution and ſatisfaction, *What is thy Beloved more then another Beloved?*

First of all obſerve, that theſe of the Church here were ſtirred up by the examples of other members of the Church to be inquiſitive after Chriſt, ſo to be ſatisfied, Hence obſerve,

Obſerv. *That there is a wondrous force in the examples of Chriſtians to ſtir up one another.* We ſee here when the Church was *ſicke of love*, the other part of the

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the members began to thinke, what is the reaſon the Church is ſo earneſt to ſeeke after Chriſt, there is ſome excellency ſure in him; for, *wiſe men doe not uſe great motions in little matters, great things are carried with great moovings*; we uſe not to ſtirre up tragedies for trifles, to make mountaines of molehills, the indeavours and carriages of great perſons that be wiſe, judicious and holy are anſwerable to the nature of things. And indeed the Church judgeth aright in this, then ſee the force of good example, any man that hath his wits about him, when he ſees others ſerious, earneſt and carefull about a thing whereof for the preſent he can ſee no reaſon (eſpecially if they have parts equall, or ſuperior to himſelfe) will reaſon thus preſently.

A reaſoning upon others earneſtneſſe.

What is the matter that ſuch a one is ſo earneſt, ſo carefull, watchfull laborious inquiſitive? It is not for want of wit, ſurely hee hath parts enough, hee underſtands himſelfe well. And then he begins to thinke, *ſure I am too cold*, hereupon comes competition, and corrivalitie: *ſurely I will bee as good as hee.*

Vſe.

To be exemplary for good to others.

Let us labour therefore to be exemplary to others, and to expreſſe the graces of God; for thus we ſhall doe more then we are aware, there is a ſecret influence in good example, though a man ſay nothing (ſaith one) there is a way to profit from a good man though he hold his peace, his courſe of life ſpeakes lowd enough, we owe this to all, even to them that are without,

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A debt to those that are without.

out, to doe them so much good as to give them a good example, and we wrong them when we doe not, and hinder their comming on by an evill, or a dead example.

That answerable to the good we shall doe to others, shall be our comfort in life and death

Let this be one motive to stirre us up to it, *that answerable to the good we shall doe in this kind, shall be our comfort in life and death, and our reward after death.* For the more spreading our good is either in word, life, or conversation, the more our consciences shall be setled in the consideration of a good life well spent, our reward shall be answerable to our communication and diffusion of good, and whereas otherwise it will lie heavy on the conscience, not onely in this life, but at the day of judgement and after; when wee shall thinke not onely of the personall ill that we stand guilty of, but exemplarie ill also.

That wee shall not only answer for our knowledge, but also for all the good examples and helps we have had and neglected.

It should moove those therefore of inferiour sort to looke to all good examples, as the Church here to the love of the other part of the Church. Wherefore are examples among us, but that we should follow them? we shall not onely be answerable for abuse of knowledge, but also of good examples we have had and neglected. Doth God kindle lights for us and shall not we walke by their light? It is a sinne not to consider the *Sunne*, the *Moone*, the *Starrs*, the *Heavens*, and *Works* of *Nature* and *Providence*; much more not to consider the *Workes of Grace*. But one place of Scripture shall close up all: which is, *Rom.* 11.11. That the example of us *Gentiles*

at

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at length ſhall ſtirre up and provoke the Jewes to beleeve. To thoſe ſtiffenecked Jewes example ſhall be ſo forcible, that it ſhall prevaile with them to beleeve and to be converted. If example be of ſuch force as to convert the Jewes that are ſo farre off, how much more is it or ſhould it be to convert Chriſtians, wondrous is the force of good example. So we come to the Queſtion it ſelfe.

Simile.

What is thy Beloved more then another Beloved, &c.

We ſee there is excellent uſe of holy conference, the Church comming to the *daughters of Ieruſalem*, ſpeaking of Chriſt her Beloved that ſhe is *ſicke of love*, &c. The *daughters of Ieruſalem* are inquiſitive to know Chriſt more and more, heere is the benefit of holy conference and good ſpeeches, one thing drawes on another, and that drawes on another, till at length the ſoule be warmed and kindled with the conſideration and meditation of heavenly things. That that is little in the beginning may bring forth great matters. This *Queſtion* to the Church, and talking with her: *I charge you if you finde my Beloved to tell him that I am ſicke of love*, breeds Queſtions in others: *What is thy Beloved*, &c. Whence upon the deſcription of her Beloved, her heart is kindled, ſhe findeth her Beloved, ſo that talking of holy and heavenly things is good for others and our ſelves alſo. *It is good for others*, as it was good for the *daughters of Ieruſalem* here, for thereupon they are

That in dealing and ſpeaking of Heavenly things, a little thing is the beginning of great matters.

That holy conference is good for others and our ſelves.

stirred up to be inquisitive after Christ, and it was good for the Church her selfe, for, hereupon she tooke occasion to make a large commendation of Christ; wherein she found much comfort.

2. *Good conference then is good for our selves*, for, we see a little seed brings forth at length a great tree, a little fire kindleth much fuell, and great things many times rise out of small despised beginnings. It was a little occasion which *Naaman* the *Assyrian* had to effect his conversion. 2 King 5. There was a poore banished woeman, a stranger, who was a Jewish maid servant, she tould her Lords servants that there was a Prophet in Jurie that could heale him: whereupon he came thither, and was converted and healed. And Philip. 1. *Paul* sheweth, that the very *report of his bonds* did a great deale of good in *Cæsars house*. Report and fame is a little matter, but little matters make way for the greater.

Exhortation to fruitfull conference. *This may put us in mind to spend our time fruitfully in good conference, when in discretion it is seasonable:* we know not when we beginne, where we may make an end? our soules may be carried up to Heaven before we are aware; for the Spirit will inlarge it selfe from one thing to another. Math. 13. *To him that hath shall be given more and more still.* God gratiously seconds good beginnings. We see the poore Disciples, when they were in a dampe for the losse of Christ, after he comes, meets them, and talks of holy things, In that very conference Luk. 24 32. *their hearts were warmed*

warmed and kindled. For, next to Heaven it ſelfe our meeting together here, it is a kinde of Paradice, the greateſt pleaſure in the world is to meet with thoſe here, whom we ſhall ever live with in Heaven. Thoſe who are good ſhould not ſpend ſuch opportunities fruitleſly.

That graces ſuiting the communion of Saintes is a great helpe to conference.

And to this end, labour for the graces of the *Communion of Saints*: for there is ſuch a ſtate, we beleeve it as an *Article of our Creed*, how ſhall we approove our ſelves to be ſuch as have intereſt unto the communion of Saints, unles we have ſpirits able to communicate good to others? pittifull and loving ſpirits that we may ſpeake a word in due ſeaſon.

What a world of precious time is ſpent in idle converſing, as if the time were a burthen, and no improovement to be made of the good parts of others? ſometimes though we know that which we aske of others, as well as they doe; yet notwithſtanding good ſpeeches will draw us to know it better, by giving occaſion to ſpeake more of it, wherewith the Spirit works more effectually and imprints it deeper. So that it ſhall be a more rooted knowledge then before. For that *doth good that is graciouſly knowne, and that is graciouſly knowne that the Spirit ſeales upon our ſoules.* Perhaps the knowledge I have is not yet ſealed ſufficiently, it is not rooted by conference, though I heare the ſame things againe, yet I may heare them in a freſh manner, and ſo I may have it ſealed deeper then before, experience finds theſe things to be true.

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That Christians should be inquisitive.

Againe, *Wee should labour heere to have our hearts inquisitive.* The Heathen man accounted it a grace in his Scholler and a signe that hee would proove hopefull, *because hee was full of Questions:* Christians should be inquisitive of the *waies of Righteousneſse*; Inquisitive of the right path which leads to Heaven, how to carry themselves in private in their families, how in all estates, Inquisitive of the excellency of Christ: *What is thy Beloved more then another Beloved? Questions end usually in resolutions*; for the soule will not rest but in satisfaction. Rest is the happinesse of the soule as it were: when a Question is mooved it will not be quiet till it have satisfaction. Therefore *doubting at the first, breeds resolution at the last.* It is good therefore to raise Questions of the practise of all necessary points, and to improove the good parts and guifts of others that wee converse with, to give satisfaction. What an excellent improovement is this of communion and Company, when nothing troubles our spirit, but wee may have satisfaction from others upon our proposing it. Perhaps God hath laide up in the parts of others satisfaction to our soules, and hath so determined that wee shall be perplexed and vexed with scruples, till wee have recourse to some whom hee hath appointed to bee helpefull to us in this kinde. Many goe mourning a great part of their daies in a kind

of

of ſullenneſſe this way, becauſe that they doe not open their eſtate to others. You ſee here the contrary practiſe of the Church, ſhe doubles the Queſtion; *What is thy Beloved more then another Beloved, O thou faireſt among woemen, what is thy Beloved more then another Beloved, that thou doſt ſo charge us?*

* * *

The end of the thirteenth Sermon.

7 AP 53

THE FOVRTEENTH SERMON.

Cant. V. IX. X.

What is thy Beloved more then another Beloved, O thou faireſt among woemen, what is thy Beloved more then another Beloved that thou doſt ſo charge us?

My Beloved is white and ruddie the chiefeſt among ten thouſand.

THE laſt time we met we left the Church *ſicke of love:* which ſtrange affection in her, together with her paſſionate charge to the *daughters of Ieruſalem,* mooved them to make this Queſtion unto her, *What is thy Beloved more then another Beloved,*

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Beloved, &c. To be in love is much: to conceale it is grievous, to vent it with ſuch fervencie and paſſion breeds aſtoniſhment, in theſe younger Chriſtians, who wonder what that is which can ſo draw away the Churches love, and runne away with her affections. They knew no ſuch excellencies of the perſon the Church ſo admired, and therefore they double the Queſtion unto her, *What is thy Beloved*, &c. *what is thy Beloved*, &c. Whereby we ſee the excellency of the ſoule which aſpires ſtill towards perfection, not reſting in any ſtate inferiour to the moſt excellent. Therefore alſo is the Churches ſickneſſe of love here, who deſires a neerer union and communion with Chriſt then ſhe at this time had.

For there are degrees of ſpirituall languiſhing, *till we be in heaven we are alway under ſome degree of this ſickneſſe of love*; though the ſoule have more communion at one time then at another. Yea the Angells are under this wiſh to ſee Chriſt together with his Church in full perfection, ſo that untill we be in Heaven where ſhall be a perfect reunion of ſoule and body, and of all the members of the Church together; there is a kinde of *ſickneſſe* attending upon the *Church* and a languiſhing.

The Queſtion asked is,

What is thy Beloved more then anothers Beloved, O thou faireſt among woemen?

What! now *faire* when her *vaile* was taken away? now *faire* when the *Watchmen* abaſed her:

her: now *faire* when ſhe was *diſgraced?* Yes, now *faire* and now *faire*, in the ſight of the *daughters of Ieruſalem*, and in the ſight of Chriſt that calls her *the faireſt among woemen*: So that under all diſgraces, infirmities and ſcandalls, under all the ſhame that riſeth in the ſoule upon ſinne, under all theſe clouds there is an excellency of the Church, ſhe is, *The faireſt among woemen*, notwithſtanding all theſe: *O thou faireſt among woemen.*

Queſt. *Whence comes this faireneſſe under ſuch ſeeming foulneſſe and diſgrace?*

Anſw. It comes from without, it is borrowed beauty as you have it, *Ezek.* 16.1.2. By nature we lie in our bloud, there muſt be a beauty put upon us, we are faire with the beauty that we have out of Chriſts wardrope. The Church ſhines in the beames of Chriſts Righteouſneſſe, ſhe is not borne thus faire, but new borne fairer. The Church of Chriſt is all glorious, but it is within, not ſeene of the world, ſhe hath a life, but it is a hidden life, *our glory and our life is hidden in Chriſt*: It is hid ſometimes from the Church it ſelfe, who ſees onely her deformity and not her beauty, her death but not her life: becauſe, *her life is hid*: here is a miſterie of Religion, *The Church is never more faire then when ſhe judgeth herſelfe to be moſt deformed; Never more happie then when ſhe judgeth herſelfe to be miſerable: never more ſtrong then when ſhee feeles herſelfe to be weake, never more righteous then when ſhe feeles herſelfe to be moſt burthened with the guilt of her owne*

That Grace only makes us lovely to Chriſt. Pſal. 45.. Colloſ. 3.

That the Church is never more faire in Chriſts eye, then when ſhe ſees & complaines moſt of her deformities. 2 Cor. 12.

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That the sense of one contrary forceth another. 2 Cor. 12. 10.

owne sinnes, becauſe the ſence of one contrary forceth to another, the ſence of ill forceth us to the fountaine of good, to have ſupply thence: *When I am weake then am I ſtrong* (ſaith *Paul*) Grace and ſtrength is perfect in weakeneſſe.

Vſe. What to judge of the Church and Gods people under ſeeming diſgraces.

This ſhould teach us what to judge of the Church and people of God, even under their ſeeming diſgraces, yet to judge of them as the excellenteſt people in the world, *Pſalm.* 16. *All my delight is in thoſe that are excellent:* to joyne our ſelves to them: eſpecially this is here to be underſtood of the Church as it is the myſticall body of Chriſt, not as a mixed body, as a viſible Church, *but as it is the Temple of the Holy Ghoſt.*

Heb. 12. 22.

Simile.

The *viſible Church* hath tearmes of excellency put upon it ſometimes, but it is in regard of the better part. As gold unrefined is called gold becauſe gold is the better part: And a heape of wheate unwinnowed is called wheate, though there be much chaffe in it, the body of Chriſt it ſelfe hath alwaies excellent tearmes given it, *O thou faireſt among woemen.*

That the cauſe why wicked men ſee not this beauty is becauſe they looke on Gods through the ſpectacles of malice. Iob. 1.

Thoſe that looke upon the Church with the ſpectacles of malice can ſee no ſuch beauty in her, though to eſpy out faults, as the Divell could in *Iob*, to quarrell, to ſlander, they are quickſighted enough, but we ſee here the Church in the judgement of the *daughters of Ieruſalem*, that ſhe is the *faireſt among woemen.*

The *Papiſts* have a painted beauty, for their Catholique Church, but here is no ſuch beauty

It

It becomes a whore to be painted, to be as faire as her hands can make her, with feighned beauty. But the Church of Chriſt hath a beauty from her husband, a reall ſpirituall beauty not deſcerned of the world.

This ſhould be of uſe to Gods children themſelves, *to helpe them in the upbraidings of conſcience* (as if they had no goodneſſe in them) *becauſe they have a great deale of ill.* Chriſtians ſhould have a double eye, one to ſet and fixe upon that which is ill in them, to humble them, and another upon that which is ſupernaturally gracious in them, to incourage themſelves, they ſhould looke upon themſelves as Chriſt lookes upon them, and judge of themſelves as he judgeth of them, by the better part. He lookes not ſo much what ill we have, for, *that ſhall be wrought out by little and little, and be aboliſhed, it is condemned already, and it ſhall be executed by little and little till it be wholy aboliſhed.* but he lookes upon us in regard of the better part, ſo ſhould wee looke upon our ſelves, though otherwhiles upon our blacke feete (our infirmities) when we are tempted to pride and haughtineſſe, but alwaies let the meane thoughts we conceive of our ſelves, make us to flie to Chriſt.

Vſe. That Chriſtians in the upbraidings of conſcience ſhould looke upon the good as on the ill in them.

That we ſhould looke upon our ſelves as Chriſt looks upon us.

What is thy Beloved more then another Beloved?

Here is a *Queſtion*, and a *Queſtion* anſwered with a *Queſtion*: Queſtions they breed knowledge (as the Greeke Proverbe is) *doubtings breed reſolution.* Whereupon the inquiſitive ſoule

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soule (usually) prooves the most learned, judicious and wise soule, therefore that great Philosopher counted it as a vertue amongst his schollers, that they would be inquisitive. So the schollers of Righteousnesse are inquisitive,

Ier. 50. *they inquire the way to Canaan, and the way to Zion with their faces thitherwards.*

That is a speciall point of wisdome to improue the gifts of other by questions.

It is a speciall part of Christians wisdome to improove the excellency of others by Questions, to have a bucket to draw out of the deepe wells of others (as *Salomon* saith) *the heart of a wise man is as deepe waters, but a man of understanding can tell how to fetch those waters out:* There be many men of deepe and excellent parts which are lost in the world, because men know not how to improove them. Therefore it is good while we have men excellent in any kind, to make use of them. It is an honour to God as well as a commoditie to our selves. Doth God suffer lights to shine in the world that we should take no notice of them, It is a wrong to our selves and a dishonour to God.

What is thy Beloved more then another Beloved, &c.

Observ. A further point from hence is, *That if wee would give incouragement to others to repaire to us for any good, we should labour to be so excellent as to adorne Religion.*

O thou fairest among woemen, what is thy Beloved, &c. They enquire of her because they have a good conceit of her: a world of good might be done if there were bred a good conceit

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of men in others; we say in sickneſſe, *a good conceipt of the Phyſitian is halfe the cure:* ſo in teaching, a good conceipt of the teacher is halfe the learning: *The daughters of Ieruſalem* had a good conceipt here in their Queſtioning of the Church: *O thou faireſt among woemen, what is thy Beloved more then another Beloved?*

That our indeavours muſt bee to make Religion lovely.

Let us labour therefore to be ſuch as may bring honour and credit to Religion, and make it lovely, that what we doe may make others thinke we doe what we doe to great purpoſe: which is oft times a ſpeciall meanes and occaſion of their converſion. Though properly the cauſe of converſion be the Spirit of God in the ordinances: yet the inducement (many times) and occaſion, is the obſervation of the courſe and carriage of thoſe that excell and are knowne to be eminent in parts and in graces, *Emulation ads ſpurrs to to the ſoule.* Doe they take ſuch courſes that are wiſer then I, and ſhall not I take the like courſe too? *Paul* ſaith, the emulation of the *Gentiles* ſhall be a meanes of the converſion of the *Iewes*, when they ſhall ſee them imbrace Chriſt, they will be incouraged to doe ſo alſo: what ſhall we thinke therefore of them that live ſo as that they bring an evill report, ſcandall and reproach upon Religion? Great and fearfull is their wickedneſſe, that by their ill converſation like *Hophny* and *Phineas* diſcredit the ordinances of the Lord.

Rom. 11. 11.

1 Sam. 2. 17.

Now the Church thus anſwers the former Queſtion touching Chriſt, *My Beloved is white and*

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That there is no rivalty in Spirituall things where is abundance for all of love.

and ruddie, the chiefest of ten thousand. She is not affraid to set out her Beloveds beauty. For, *there is no envie in Spirituall things:* It is want of wisdome amongst men to commend a thing that is very lovely to others, and so to set an edge upon their affections, when they cannot both share; and the more one hath, the lesse another hath of all things here below. But in Spirittuall things there is no envie at the sharing of others in that we love our selves: because all may be loved alike, Christ hath grace and affection enough for all his: he hath not (as *Esaw* speakes) *but one blessing:* No, he can make all his happy. Therefore the Church stands not upon tearmes, when the *daughters of Ierusalem* enquire about her *Beloved*, I tell you freely saies she what my *Beloved* is: First in generall the answer is, *My Beloved is white and ruddie, the chiefest among ten thousand*, then afterwards there is a specification of the particulars, she will not stand upon the grosse, but admires at every parcell in the thing beloved, every thing is lovely as wee shall see in particular afterwards.

My Beloved is white and ruddie, the chiefest among ten thousand.

Quest.

We will take that which is safe; because we will have sure footing (as neere as we can) in this misticall portion of Scripture, what is that *white and ruddie, why doth the Church set forth the Spirituall excellencies of Christ by that which is most outwardly excellent and most beautifull.*

Because

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Answ.

Because of all complections the mixed complection of these two colours *white* and *ruddie* is the purest and the best, therefore she sets out the beauty and the Spirituall excellency of Christ by this *white and ruddie*, beauty ariseth of the mixture of these two. First she sets out the beauty of Christ positively, and then by way of comparison, *The chiefest among ten thousand.*

What beauty is and wherein it consisteth.

But what is this *white* and *ruddie*: what is beauty?

1.

Proportion and feature.

To the making up of beauty there is required a sound healthy constitution, so as the particulars have a due proportion, there must be a harmony of the parts, one suiting with another, for *comelinesse stands in oneneſse*, when many things (as it were) are one. *Vncomlineſse is in diverſity*, when divers things are jumbled together, that belong to many heads; as we say it is uncomely to have an old mans head on a young mans shoulders, but when all things are so suited that they make one agreeing exactly there is beauty and comelinesse.

2.

In the grace of colour.

Besides soundnesse of constitution and comelinesse of proportion, *there is a grace of colour* that maketh beauty, which ariseth out of the other, so that *soundneſse and goodneſse of conſtitution together with the exact proportion of the variety of parts, having with it this gracefulneſſe of colour and complection makes up that which we call beauty.* In a word, then this carnation colour, *white* and *ruddie*, may be understood of that excellent

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The strange and admirable mixture in Christ.

and sweete mixture that makes such a gracefulnesse in Christ, in him there is wonderfull purity and holinesse, and yet *a wonderfull weaknesse*, there is God *the great God* and *a peece of earth*, of flesh in one person, a *bloudy pearced*, and a *glorious shining body*, *humility* and *glory*: Justice, wonderfull justice and yet exceeding love and mercie: Justice to his enemies, Mercie to his Children.

Observ.
In what regard Christ was most beautifull.

Christ is a most beautifull Person.

Not as God onely but as man, the Mediator God and man, the Person of the Mediator is a beautifull Person; as *Psal.* 45. there is a notable description of Christ, and of his Church, *Thou art fairer then the Children of men, grace is powred into thy lips*, &c.

That the lovelines and beauty of Christ must be spiritually considered.

But *the lovelinesse and beauty of Christ is especially Spirituall*, in regard of the graces of his Spirit. A deformed person, man or woman, of a homely complection and constitution, yet notwithstanding when we discerne them by their conversation to be very wise and of a lovely and sweet spirit, very able and withall wondrous willing to impart their abilities, being wondrous usefull: what a world of love doth it breed, though we see in their outward man nothing lovely. The consideration of what *sufficiency* is in Christ, *wisdome*, *power*, *goodnesse* and *love*, that made him come from Heaven to Earth, to take our nature upon him, to marrie us and joyne our nature to his (that he might joyne us to him in spirituall bonds) the

the consideration of his *meekenesse* and *gentlenesse* how he never turned any backe againe that came to him, should make us highly prize him, indeed some went backe of themselves (as the young man in discontent) Christ turned them not backe: nay he loved the appearance of goodnesse in the young man and imbraced him. Hee is of so sweet a nature that he never upbraided those that followed him with their former sinnes; as *Peter* with deniall, and the like. He is of so gracious a nature that he tooke not notice of petty infirmities in his Disciples, but tells them of the danger of those sinnes that might hurt them: being of so sweet a nature that *he will not quench the smoaking flax, nor breake the bruised reed*, his whole life being nothing but a doing of good, *He did all things well* (as the Gospell speakes) excellent well. Mat. 19. 22. Isa. 42.

Now the consideration of what a gracious Spirit is in Christ, must needs be a loadstone of love, and make him beautifull. Therefore *Bernard* saith well, *When I thinke of Christ, I thinke at once of God, full of Majesty and Glory, and at the same time of Man full of meekenesse, gentlenesse and sweetnesse.* So, let us consider of Christ as of the *Mighty God, powerfull*, and withall consider of him as a gentle and mild man; that came riding meekely on an Asse (as the Scripture sets him out) He was for all commers and gave entertainement to all: *Come unto me all yee that are weary and heavy laden*, &c. For the most weake and miserable person of all had the Mat. 21. Mat. 11. 28.

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Luk. 16. 10.

Heb. 12.

Simile.

Obſerv.
Pſal 45. 7.
In regard of the perſonall union with the God head in our nature Chriſt is the cheefe of all. In regard all our fulnes comes from Chriſt he is the chiefe of all.

ſweeteſt entertainment of him, *He came to ſeeke, and to ſave that which was loſt.* Let us I ſay thinke of him both as of the great God, and withall as of meeke Man: the one to eſtabliſh our ſoules, that he is able to doe great matters; the other to draw us to him becauſe he loves us. We are affraid to goe to God *a conſuming fire*, but now let us thinke we goe to bone of our bone and fleſh of our fleſh, to our brother, to one that out of his goodneſſe abaſed himſelfe of purpoſe that we might be one with him, who loved us more then his owne life, and was contented to carry the curſe for us that we might be bleſſed of God for ever, and to ſuffer a moſt painefull and ſhamefull death that ſo hee might make us heires of everlaſting life.

Chriſt is Spiritually lovely, *the chiefeſt of ten thouſand.* The Church ſets him out by compariſon, *a ſtandardbearer*, a carrier of the *banner of ten thouſand.* For, as the goodlieſt men uſe to carry the Enſigne, the Banner, ſo he the goodlieſt of all other is the ſtandard bearer.

Whence we gather, *That Chriſt as he is beautifull and good, ſo he is incomparably beyond all compariſon good, He is a ſtandard bearer one among ten thouſand, annoynted with the Oyle of gladneſſe above his fellowes.*

Firſt, for that he is ſo neere to God by the perſonall union.

And in regard likewiſe, *That all others have all from him: of his fulneſſe we receive grace for grace,*

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Simile.

grace, ours is but a derivative fulneſſe, his glory and ſhining is as the ſhining of the body of the Sunne, ours as the light of the Aire, which is derived from the glory of the Sunne, ours is but the fulneſſe of the ſtreame, and of the veſſell, but the fulneſſe of the fountaine and of the ſpring is his: thereupon he is called *the head of the Church*; the head is the tower of the body which hath all the five ſenſes in it, and wiſdome for the whole body. It ſeeth, heareth, underſtandeth, and doth all for the body; having influence into the other parts of it. So Chriſt is above all, and hath influence into all his Church, not onely eminencie, but influence. Col. 1. 18.

That Chriſt is ſet forth by all earthly excellencies. M. 1. 4 2.

What is excellent in the Heavens? the *Sunne: So Chriſt is the Sunne of Righteouſneſſe: the Starrs, He is the bright morning Starr, the Light: He is the Light of the world.* Come to all creatures, you have not any excellent amongſt them but Chriſt is ſtiled from it. He is, *the Lyon of the tribe of Iuda*, the Lilly and the Roſe, and *the Lambe of God that taketh away the ſinnes of the world, the Tree of life*, &c. There is not a thing neceſſary to nature, but you have a ſtile from it given to Chriſt, to ſhew, that he is as neceſſary as *Bread* and *Water*, and the food of life. When we ſee *Light* therefore; thinke of the *true Light*: when the *Sunne*, thinke of the *Sunne of Righteouſneſſe*: ſo remember *the bread and water of life* in our common food, therefore the Sacraments were ordained, that as we goe to Joh. 6. Ioh. 4.

SER. XIV. *Simile.*

the ſea by the conduct of rivers, ſo we might goe to the ſea of all excellency and goodneſſe by the conduct of theſe rivers of goodnes to be led by every excellency in the creature, to that of our mediatour Chriſt, who is *the cheefeſt among ten thouſand.*

That Chriſt only was King, Prieſt & Prophet.

To come more particularly to ſpeake of his excellencies, omitting his *two Natures* in one Perſon *God* and *Man*; that we may conſider his Offices, a *King*, *Prieſt* and *Prophet*: he being the chiefe in all theſe, ſo all good *Kings* before him were tipes of him, as alſo the *Prophets* and *Prieſts*, he was all in one. Never any before him was *King*, *Prieſt* and *Prophet*, as hee was *King*, *Prieſt* and *Prophet* in one, ſo in every reſpect he was incomparable above all. Such a *King*, as is *King* of *Kings*, and ſubdueth things unconquerable to all other Kings, even the greateſt enemies of all, ſuch a *King* as conquered the *World*, *Death*, *Hell* and *Sinne*, all things that are terrible: *Death* you know is called *the king of feares*, becauſe it terrifieth even Kings themſelves. Chriſt is ſuch a *King* as takes away theſe terrible greateſt ills of all, ſuch a *King* as rules over the ſoule and conſcience, (the beſt part of man) where he ſettles and ſtabliſheth peace, ſuch a *King* as ſets up his Kingdome in our very ſoules and hearts, guides our thoughts, deſires, actions and affections, ſetting up a peaceable government there, ſo hee is an incomparable *King* even in regard of that Office; *He is the chiefeſt of ten thouſand*,

I. *A King.*

ſuch

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such a *King* as carries the government upon his owne shoulders, as it is *Isa.9.6.* He devolves not the care to another to make it as he list and so be a cypher himselfe, but hee carries all upon his owne shoulder, hee needs not a *Pope* for his vicar.

2. *A Priest.*

Againe, as a *Priest* such a *High Priest* as offered himselfe a sacrifice by his *eternall Spirit*: he as *God* offered up his *Man-hood*, such a *Priest* as hath satisfied the wrath of God, and reconciled God to man. All other *Priests* were but types of this *Priest*, who is such a *Priest* as never dies, *but lives for ever to make intercession for us in Heaven*, by vertue of that sacrifice which he offered in the daies of his flesh: He was both *Priest* and *Sacrifice*. Such a *Priest as is touched with our infirmities*, so *mild* and *gentle*, full of pitty and mercy. No *Priest* to this *Priest*, God onely smelt a sweet smell from this sacrifice.

3. *A Prophet.*

And for his *Propheticall Office*, hee is a Prophet beyond all others, such a one as can instruct the soule, other men can propound doctrines, but hee can open the understanding and hath the key of the heart, the *key of David* which can open the soule: by his holy Spirit hee can make the very simple full of knowledge, such a Prophet as hath his chaire in the very heart of man, this great *Bishop of our soules*, *the Angell of the covenant*, that λογὸς, *the messenger of the Father*: so he is *the chiefe of ten thousand*: consider him as *King*, as *Priest* or as *Prophet*.

Luk.24.

Pro.1.

1 Pet.2.25.

λογὸς

Ser. XIV.

Vse.

The use of this is exceeding pregnant, comfortable and large, that we have such a Saviour such an eminent person, so neere so puculiar to us. *Our Beloved, my Beloved.* If he were a *Beloved the cheefe of ten thousand*, it were no great matter, but he is mine, he is thus excellent excellent considered with propriety in it, and a peculiar propriety, *peculiarity and propriety together with transcendent excellency makes happy if there be any enjoying of it.* Therefore repent not your selves of your repentings, but thinke I have not cast away my love, but have set it upon such an object as deserves it. *for my Beloved is the cheefest of ten thousand.*

Happines what.

* * *

The end of the fourteenth Sermon.

THE

THE FIFTEENTH SERMON.

Cant. V. X.

My Beloved is white and ruddie the chiefeſt among ten thouſand.

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(ere ſhe deſcend into Particulars) ſhe breakes foorth into this generall deſcription of her Beloved, whereby ſhe cuts of from all hopes of equalling him, *My Beloved is white and ruddie*, (exceeding faire) nay, *the cheefe among ten thouſand*, (none like him) ſhe would not have us thinke ſhe had beſtowed her love but on the moſt excellent of all, *the cheefe of ten thouſand*. Well were it for us that we could doe ſo in our love, that we might be able to juſtifie our choice, not to ſpend it on ſinfull, vaine and unprofitable things, which cauſe repentance and mourning in the concluſion, whereof the *Church* here worthily cleereth herſelfe; in that ſhe had choſen *the cheefe among ten thouſand*.

And moſt juſtly did ſhe place her affections upon ſo excellent an object, who was ſo full of

Coloſ. 1. 11. *all the treaſures of wiſdome and knowledge, the life of our life, in whom dwelt all the fulneſſe of the Godhead bodily*, in whom was a gracious mixture and compound of all heavenly graces, where *Greatneſſe* and *Goodneſſe*, *Iuſtice* and *Mercy*, *God* and *Man* meete in one Perſon. Such an one

Mat. 12. who breakes no *bruiſed reed, nor quenches the ſmoaking flax*, who refuſes not ſinners, but invites them unto him: offering to heale all and cure all who come unto him: he is a King indeed;

Ioh. 5. but this alſo approoves her choice; he rules all, commands all, judges all, what then can ſhe want who hath ſuch a friend, ſuch a husband, whoſe government is ſo winning, mild and mercifull?

He

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He is not such a *Monarch* as loves to get authority by sternesse like *Rehoboam*. But by those aimeable graces of *gentlenesse* and *love*, all the excellencies of holinesse, purity and righteousnesse, are sweetly tempered with love and meekenesse in him: you may see for instance how hee takes his Disciples part against the *Pharisees*, (and the poore womans that came to wash his feet and kissed them,) against the *Pharisee* that had invited him to dinner. The Church is a company of despised people, that are scorned of Pharisaicall proud spirits, who perhaps have morallity and strength of parts to praise them with. Now Christ takes part with the broken spirits against all proud spirits, howsoever he be gone to Heaven (where he is full of Majesty) yet he hath not forgotten his meekenesse nor changed his nature with change of honour. He is now more honoured then he was, for, *he hath a Name above all Names, in Heaven or in Earth*, yet he is pittifull still. *Saul Saul why persecutest thou mee?* He makes the Churches case his owne still, together with beames of glory there are bowells of pitty in him, the same that he had here upon earth. Which makes him so lovely to the truly broken hearted beleeving soule, *My Beloved is white and ruddy*.

Luk. 7. 44.

That Christ takes part with the afflicted side.

Acts 9.

He is set out likewise by comparing him with all others whatsoever, *hee is the cheese of ten thousand*, a certaine number for an uncertaine, that is, the chiefe among all, in all things

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things Christ hath the preheminence: *hee is the first borne from the dead, hee is the first borne of every creature, he is the eldest brother,* he is the cheefe among all. For all *Kings, Priests* and *Prophets* before were but types and shaddowes of him: Hee the body, the truth and the substance. And (as was shewed before) he is all three in one, *King, Priest* and *Prophet,* the great *Doctor* and *Prophet* of his Church, that spake by all the former Prophets, and speakes by his ministers to the end of the world. *The Angell of the covenant,* that λογὸς the word, that expresseth his Fathers brest, that as he came from the bosome of his Father so laies open his counsell to man-kind. It was he that spake by *Noah,* and preached by his Spirit to the soules that are now in prison, (as *Peter* speakes) so, *he is the cheefe among all.* But especially in regard of his Righteousnesse; for which *Paul accounted all dung and drosse to be found in Christ, not having his owne Righteousnesse, but the Righteousnesse that is in Christ:* which is more then the Righteousnesse of an Angell, being the Righteousnesse of God-Man, and above all the Righteousnesse of the law.

1 Pet. 3. 19.

Phil. 3. 8.

Quest. *Answ.* *That peculiaritie of interest ioyned with the excellencie of Christ is that which so ravisheth the Church.*

But what is this to us or to the Church? yes, for his beauty and excellency is the Churches, because hee is the Churches. *My Beloved is white and ruddie, and my Beloved is the chiefe among ten thousand.* It is the peculiar interest that the Church hath in Christ that doth relish her spirit, excellencie with propriety in him: *I am my Beloveds*

Beloved is and my Beloved is mine. The more excellent the husband is, the more excellent is the wife, shee onely shines in his beames, therefore it is the interest that wee have in Christ that indeares Christ to us. But to come to more particular application of it. Is Christ thus excellent, superexcellent, thus transcendently excellent, *white and ruddie, the cheife of ten thousand* this serves,

To draw those that are not yet in Christ unto him. 1.

To comfort those that are in Christ. 2.

First, those that are not yet in Christ, not contracted to him to draw them; what can prevaile more then that which is in Christ? Beauty and excellencies, greatnesse and goodnesse. And indeed one maine end of our calling the ministery is, to lay open and unfold the unsearchable riches of Christ, to digg up the mine, thereby to draw the affections of those that belong to God to Christ.

Vse. 1. *That supereminent excellencies in Christ ought to draw those to him who are not yet drawne to him.*

But it is not enough to know that there are excellencies in Christ to draw us to him, but, *there must be a sight of our misery, what beggers we are and how indebted.* Before we are in Christ we are not our owne, the Divell layes claime to us that we are his, death laies claime to us, we are under sinne, we cannot satisfie one of a thousand, therefore this inforceth to make out to joyne with him that can discharge all our debts, answer all our suits, and non-suite Sathan in the Court of Heaven. When once we are married

That with a sight of Christs excellencie, wee must see our owne debt, beggery and misery to draw us unto Christ.

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married to the Lord of Heaven and Earth all is ours, we have a large Charter, *All things are yours, and you are Christs and Christ is Gods.*

1 Cor. 3. 22.

Quest. *Why are all things ours?*

Answ. Becauſe wee are married to Chriſt who is Lord of all. It is the end of our calling to ſue for a marriage betweene Chriſt and every ſoule, wee are the friends of the Bride, to bring the Church to him, and the friends of the Church to bring Chriſt to them: It is the end of our miniſtry to bring the ſoule and Chriſt together, and let no debts, no ſinnes hinder, for eſpecially he invites ſuch as are ſenſible of their ſinnes, *where ſinne abounds, grace abounds much more. Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden.* And, *hee came to ſeeke and to ſave that which was loſt.* He requires no more, but that we bee ſenſible of our debts and miſeries, which ſence hee workes likewiſe by his holy Spirit.

That ſeeing the end of our miſery is to woe us to come unto Chriſt, wee ſhould not be diſcouraged to come unto him.

Rom. 3. 20. Mat 11. 28. Luk. 19. 20.

Againe, for thoſe that have entertained Chriſt, *let them ſee what an excellent gracious Perſon they have entertained,* who is *the cheefe of ten thouſand.* The world thinks them a company of ſilly meane people that make choice of Chriſt, Religion, the Word, and ſuch things, but here is a juſtification of their choice, they chooſe him that is *the cheefe of ten thouſand, Let him kiſſe me with the kiſſes of his mouth* (ſaith the Spouſe,) *for thy love is better then wine, nay then life it ſelfe:* A Chriſtian may juſtifie the choice that he hath made with *Mary of the good part*;

For thoſe in the ſtate of grace to ſee what an excellent perſon they have entertained.

Cant. 1.

Luk 10. 41.

againſt

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againſt all thoſe that ſhall diſparage his choice. Let the world account Chriſtians what they will; that they are a company of deluded beſotted perſons, fooles and madmen. The Chriſtian is the onely wiſe man: *Wiſdome is ſeene in choice eſpecially*; and here is the choice of that which is excellent and moſt excellent of all, *the cheefe of ten thouſand.*

So alſo, *Wee may ſee here the deſperate and baſe folly of all whatſoever (ſave true Chriſtians)* what doe they make choice of to joyne to, that which is baſe, the condemned world, vaine tranſitory things, and refuſe Chriſt? Are they in their right wits who refuſe a Husband that is noble for birth, rich for eſtate, mighty for power, abundant in kindneſſe and love it ſelfe, every way excellent? and take a baſe, ignoble, beggerly perſon? this is the choice of the world. God complaines *Iſraell would none of mee*, &c. What ſhall we judge therefore of thoſe that will none of Chriſt when he woes and ſues them, but prefer with *Eſau* a meſſe of pottage before their eternall birthright, with *Adam* an apple before Paradice, and with *Iudas* thirty peeces of ſilver before Chriſt himſelfe, this is the ſtate of many men. *To be married to Chriſt is to take him for an husband, to be ruled by him in all things.* Now when we prefer baſe commodities and contentments before peace of conſcience and the enjoying of his love; what is it, but for pelfe and commoditie, thirty peeces of ſilver (perhaps for ſix pence

Vſe. 3. The deſperate miſerable choice of moſt men.

Simile.

Pſal. 81.

What it is to be married to Chriſt.

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a thing of nothing) to refuse Christ, yet this is the condition of base worldlings that live by sense and not by faith. So then as it serves to comfort those that have made a true choice, so it serves to shew the madnesse and folly of all others, which one day will feele their hearts full of horrour and confusion, and their faces of shame, when they shall thinke, what hath Christ made such sute to my heart to winne my love? hath he ordained a ministery for to bring me in? made such large promises, is he so excellent? and was this discovered to me and yet would I none of him? what did I choose, and what did I leave? I left Christ with all his riches, and made choise of the *pleasures and profits of sinne, which are but for a season.* When the conscience is once thoroughly awaked this will torment it, the punishment of losse, not of losse simply, as the losse of Christ and the losse of Heaven, but, *the losse of Christ and of Heaven so discovered and opened:* therefore there is no condition in the world so terrible as of those that live in the Church, and heare those things of Christ crucified unfolded to them before their eyes, as *Paul* speakes of the ministery, it makes Christs crosse so open to them as if he had beene crucified before their eyes, yet notwithstanding yeeld to their base hearts desires and affections before these excellencies, which if they had a spirit of faith would draw their hearts to him.

Heb. 11.

That the greatest losse of all is Christ discovered in his excellencie.

Gal. 3.

Therfore let us consider how we heare those things, it concernes us neerely: on the one side

To take heed how we heare.

we

we see what we get if we joyne with Christ, we have him and his: on the contrary we loose him; and not onely so, but we gaine eternall misery, and perish eternally. O what baseneſſe of mind possesseth us, Christ left all things in love to us, and we leave Christ for any paultry thing in the world, almost to please and content the humours of sinnefull men, to attaine a few empty titles, to get a little wealth, injoy a little pleasure. You see then the equity of that terrible commination that you have, 1 *Cor.* 16. *If any man love not the Lord Iesus Christ let him be Anathema maranatha.* Let him be accurſed for ever that loves not the Lord Jesus Christ, if any man sinne there is a remedy to discharge his sinne in Jesus Christ, if he will marry him and take him: but when Christ is offered and we will have none of him, we sinne against the Gospell; and then there is no remedy, there is nothing but *Anathema*, and *maranatha*; therefore *the most dangerous sinnes of all, are those against the light of the Gospell:* when yet we choose rather to live as we list, then to joyne our selves to Christ. To this purpose *Heb.* 2. S. *Paul* makes an use of the first chapter, wherein he sets out the excellency of Christ whom the Angels adore, he is so beautifull, so lovely that God the Father is in love with him, and pronounceth *this is my Beloved sonne:* In the beginning of the second chapter, *Wherefore* (saith he) *how shall we escape if wee neglect so great salvation*, for, *If they escaped not* Mat. 3. 17. Heb. 2.

that despised Moses law, &c. *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?* he saies not, *if we oppose Christ:* but if we neglect him, if we doe not love so great salvation, as 2 *Thes.* 1.8. it is said, *Christ will come in flaming fire to take vengeance of all those that doe not know God, and obey not the Gospell of Christ*, though they do not persecute it.

Therefore this reprooves all civill morrall persons that thinke they have riches enough, not onely debauched persons, but selfe-sufficient persons, that thinke they have any Righteousnesse of their owne, let them know, *that Christ shall come in flaming fire, to take vengence of such:* This is the scope of the second *Psalme*, which yee know sets out the excellency of Christ, *I have set my King upon Zion*, God the Father there annoints Christ King of the Church: To what end? *That wee should kisse the Sunne*, kisse him with the kisse of subjection (as *subjects* doe their *Prince:*) with the kisse of *love*, as the *Spouse* doth her *Husband*, and with the *kisse of faith.* But what if we doe not kisse him, and subject our selves to him; love him and beleeve in him? *If his wrath be once kindled happy are all those that trust in him:* Hee is a Lambe, but such a one as can be angry, as *Rev.* 6. It is said, *The Kings and great persons of the world, fly from the wrath of the Lamb*, he that is so sweete mild and gentle, if we joyne with him, on the contrary, if we come not unto him, we shall finde the wrath of the Lamb, a terrible wrath, which

Psal. 2.

What it is to kisse the Sunne.

which the greateſt Potentates in the world ſhall deſire to be hid from. *If his wrath be once kindled, bleſſed are all thoſe that truſt in him*, and woe be to them that doe not receive him.

For us that profeſſe our ſelves to be in Chriſt, and to be joyned to him that is thus excellent, let us make this uſe, *to make him the rule of our choice in other things. In the choiſe of friends, chooſe ſuch as are friends to Chriſt*, take heed of ſociety with Idolaters, or with prophane wretched perſons. If you will be joyned to Chriſt, and profeſſe your ſelves to be ſo, then let us joyne to none but thoſe that we can enjoy and Chriſt too. So in *marriage* let the rule of choice be, the love of Chriſt; and likewiſe let the meaſure of our reſpect to all things be, the reſpect to Chriſt, let us meaſure our love to wife and children, to kindred, friends, and to all creatures whatſoever, as it may ſtand with love to Chriſt. Obey in the Lord, Marry in the Lord, doe all things in the Lord, ſo as may ſtand with the love and allowance of the Lord.

Vſe. 2.
For thoſe who are in Chriſt to make him the rule of our choice in other things. In friendſhip.

In Marriage.

In all things whatſoever love all with reference to Chriſt.
1 Cor. 7. 39.

Make alſo, *a Vſe of Direction*, How to come to valew Chriſt thus: as to keepe an high eſteeme of him, for this followes infallibly and undeniably: If Chriſt be, *the cheefe of ten thouſand*, he muſt have the cheeſe of our affections, *above ten thouſand*: for, as he is in excellency, hee muſt have place in our hearts anſwerable thereunto; for, then our ſoules are as they ſhould be, when they judge of, and affect things as they are in themſelves.

Vſe. 3.
For direction.

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Answ. 1. *By a deepe consideration of our necessity without him.*

That exalting Christ high in the heart is a strong preservative against sinne.

First, Let us enter into a serious consideration of the need we have of Christ, of our misery without him, of our happinesse if we be joyned with him, the soule being thus convinced, the affections must needs follow the sanctified judgement.

What will come of it, If Christ be set in the highest place in our heart, If we crowne him there, and make him *King of Kings and Lord of Lords*, in a hearty submitting of all the affections of the soule to him; while the soule continues in that frame, it cannot be drawne to sinne, discomfort, and despaire. The honours pleasures and profits that are got by base ingagements to the humours of men, what are these to Christ? when the soule is rightly possest of Christ and of his excellency, It disdaines that any thing should come in competition with him.

Againe, *It stands firme against all discouragements whatsoever:* for, it sets Christ against all, who is *the cheefe of ten thousand.* The soule in this case will set Christ against the anger and wrath of God, against Sathan and all our spirituall enemies. Christ is the Angell of the covenant: Sathan is a Lyon, a roaring Lyon: Christ the Lyon of the tribe of Juda: Sathan a Serpent, a Dragon: But Christ the true Brasen Serpent, the very looking upon whom will take away all the stings and fiery darts of Sathan whatsoever: wherefore it is said, 1 *Iohn.* 5. that Faith is that that overcommeth the world.

How

How doth Faith overcome the world? Becauſe it overcomes all things in the world, as on the right hand pleaſures and profits and honours, and on the left hand threatnings, paines, loſſes and diſgraces, by ſetting Chriſt againſt all.

Againe, if we would have a right judgement and eſteeme of Chriſt, *Let us labour to weane our affections as much as may be from other things.* Fleſhly hearts that have runne ſo deepely into the world and vanities of this preſent life, It is in a ſorte an extraordinary taske for them to be drawne away, and pulled from the world (as a child from a full breſt) which they have ſucked ſo long. Now for ſweet affections that are tender, it is an excellent advantage they have to conſider betimes that there is that in Religion and in the Goſpell which is worth their beſt and prime affections, the flower and marrow of them, let them begin with young *Timothie*, *Daniell* and *Ioſeph* to love *Chriſt* from their childhood. It is a deſperate folly on the other hand to put off the regard of good things till after when we ſhall be leſſe fit, when the *underſtanding* will be darkened, and the affections blunted, when we ſhall not have that edge, nature being decayed and the world having taken ſuch poſſeſſion of the ſoule, that we ſhall not value this excellencie. Therefore let us begin betimes to make up the marriage betweene Chriſt and the ſoule, no time indeed is too late, but it were to be wiſhed that thoſe that are young would be thus wiſe for their ſoules betimes.

2.
We muſt labour to weane our hearts from other things.

Tim. 3. 15.

The danger of delaying to ſeek Chriſt late in our old age.

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To value Christ we must beg of God a spirit to judge aright of our corruptions.

Besides if wee would highly value *Christ*, (*beg of God a spirit that wee may judge aright of our corruptions,*) for, *In what measure we can discerne the height, and bredth, and depth of our corrupt nature, In that measure shall we judge of the height, and bredth, and depth of the excellency of Christ.* The sweetest soules are the most humble soules, those that love Christ most, are those that have beene stung most with the sence of their sinnes, *where sinne most abounds in the sence and feeling of it, grace much more abounds in the sence and feeling of that.* Did ever soule love Christ more then that woeman that had so many Divels cast out of her? And, *Paul* that had such great sinnes forgiven. Doth any man so love his creditor as he that hath much debt forgiven him? It is our Saviour Christs owne reason, therefore these two goe alwaies with the true Church. 1. *The true knowledge of the corruption of nature, and misery by reason of it.* And 2. *The true sence and feeling of it, with true and hearty sorrow for it,* &c. In Popery they slight Originall sinne, that mother breeding sinne, Actuall sinnes be veniall, and many sins no sins. And therefore they esteeme so slightly of Christ, that they joyne *Saints*, the *Pope*, *Works* and *Satisfaction* with him, because they know not the depth of the malady, how blacke sinne is, what a cursed estate we are in by nature: *they have slight, shallow and weake conceipts of sinne, therefore they have answerable weake, and shallow conceipts of Christ and of his Righteousnesse and*

Rom. 5.

Luk 7.

Two attendants of the true Church.

Why sin is so slighted in Popery.

and excellency. Therefore the conviction of our sinnes goeth before the conviction of righteousnesse in Christ, (as it is said, *Ioh.* 16.) *The Holy Ghost shall convince the world of sinne and then of righteousnesse*: for except the soule be convinced of sinne and of ill in it selfe, it will never bee truely convinced of good and of righteousnesse in Christ.

Why the Passeover was eaten with sowre herbes.

The *Passeover* was alwaies eaten with sowre herbes, because it should ad a relish to the feast. So Christ the true *Passeover* we never relish truely without sower herbes, the consideration of sinne with the desert of it. Christ savours otherwise to a man humbled for his sinnes, then he doth to another man not touched therewith: otherwise to a poore man then he doth to a rich: otherwise to a man that the world goes not well on his side, then to a prosperous man. One savoury discourse of Christ relisheth more to an afflicted soule, then seven discourses with such as are drunk with prosperity, nothaving a brayne strong enough to conceive, nor an appetite to relish heavenly things.

That it is our great folly to murmure at the crosse which recovers our spirituall taste and relish.

Therefore why doe wee murmure at the crosse, when all is to recover our spirituall taste and relish? *Salomon* had lost his taste and relish of Christ, he never made *his song of songs* when he was in his Idolatrous way, nor was so in love with Christ and his excellencies when he doted so much upon his wives: no, but when he had recovered his spirits taste and relish of heavenly things once, then made he the Booke of the

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Preacher. When he had runne through variety of things, and ſaw all to be nothing but vexation of ſpirit, and beſides that, vanitie: then he paſſeth his verdict upon all things, that they were *vanity*. So it is with us, we can hardly prize Chriſt without ſome afflictions, ſome croſſe or other: therfore here the Church is faine to indure a ſpirituall deſertion, to ſet an edge upon her affections: Now when ſhe is thus in her diſertions, *Chriſt is white and ruddie, the cheefe of ten thouſand.*

Want makes us value things the more.

We valew more, and ſet a higher prize on things in the want of them (ſuch is our corruption) then in the injoying of them. And if God remember us not with affliction, then let us afflict, humble and judge our ſelves: enter into our owne ſoules to view how we ſtand affected to *Chriſt*, to Heaven, and to heavenly things: how doe I relliſh and eſteeme them? if I have loſt my eſteeme and valuing, where have I loſt it, conſider in what ſinne, in what pleaſure, in what company I loſt it; and converſe no more with ſuch as dull our affections to heavenly things.

4. *To eſteeme Chriſt highly uſing our infirmities to this end looking upon them.* Iſa. 64. 6.

And, *Let us make uſe likewiſe of our infirmities and ſinnes to this purpoſe, to ſet an high prize on the excellencies of Chriſt*, we carry about us alwaies infirmities and corruptions, what uſe ſhall we make of them? not to truſt to our owne righteouſneſſe, which is *as a defiled cloth*: But fly to *Chriſts Righteouſneſſe*, which is the *Righteouſneſſe* of *God-man*, all being as *dung and droſſe* in regard of

of that: Often thinke with thy ſelfe what am I, a poore ſinfull creature, but I have a Righteouſneſſe in Chriſt that anſwers all, I am weake in my ſelfe, but Chriſt is ſtrong, and I am ſtrong in him. I am fooliſh in my ſelfe, but I am wiſe in him, what I want in my ſelfe, I have in him: he is mine, and his Righteouſneſſe is mine, which is the *Righteouſneſſe of God-man*, being cloathed with this I ſtand ſafe, againſt *Conſcience*, *Hell*, *wrath* and whatſoever. Though I have daily experience of my ſinnes, yet there is more *Righteouſneſſe* in Chriſt who is mine, and who is *the cheefe of ten thouſand*, then there is ſin in me. When thus we ſhall know Chriſt, then wee ſhall know him to purpoſe.

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The end of the fifteenth Sermon.

THE

7 AP 53

THE SIXTEENTH SERMON.

Cant. V. X, XI, XII, XIII.

My Beloved is white and ruddie the chiefeſt among ten thouſand.

His head is as fine gold, his lockes are buſhie and blacke as a raven.

His eyes are as the eyes of doves, by the rivers of waters, waſhed with milke and fitly ſet, &c.

HEnce likewiſe we may anſwer ſome doubts that may ariſe, as why the death of one man (*Chriſt*) ſhould be of value for ſatisfaction for the ſinnes of the whole world? how can this be?

Object. *How one mans ſatisfaction ſhall ſatisfie for the ſins of all.*

O But what kind of man was he? *the cheefe among*

Anſw.

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among ten thousand, especially considering that his excellency ariseth from the grace of his Personall Union of God and Man. The first *Adam* tainted thousands, and would have tainted a world of men more if there had beene more, but he was meere man that did this, and shall not Christ God and Man the *second Adam* advance the world, and ten thousand worlds if there had beene more, *hee is cheefe among ten thousand.*

His head is as most fine gold, his lockes are bushie and blacke as a raven, &c.

1. *Positively*, *Hee is white and ruddie.* 2. *Comparatively*, *Hee is the chiefest of ten thousand.*

The Church doth not thinke it sufficient in generall to set out Christ thus, but she descends into a particular description of him by all the parts of a body that are conspicuous. First in generall observe hence, *That it is the nature of love upon all occasions to reflect upon the thing loved.* As the Church here, from things that are excellent in the world, borrowes phrases and comparisons to set out the excellency of Christ, exalting him above any other thing. Whatsoever the soule of a Christian sees in Heaven or Earth, it takes occasion thence to thinke of Christ.

Love is ever industrious to set out the praises of the beloved.

Againe, In generall observe from hence, seeing the Church fetcheth comparison from doves eyes, from the body of a man and other things, *That there are some beames of excellency in every creature.* There is somewhat of God in every

The divers relations God takes upon him shewes the beames of his excellency in the creatures.

every creature, this makes the meditation of the creature to be usefull, there is none, even the meaneſt but it hath a beeing, and thereby in a ſort ſets out the beeing of God. Why doth God ſtile himſelfe a Shield, a Rocke, a Buckler, a Shaddow, and the like. But to ſhew that there is ſomething of him in theſe, and therfore to teach us to riſe from them to him, in whom all thoſe excellencies that are ſcattered in them are united.

In innocency we knew God, and in him we had knowledge of the creature, but now we are faine to helpe our ſelves from the knowledge of the creature to riſe to the knowledge of God.

His head is as fine gold.

A little in generall, ſee the boldneſſe and largeneſſe of the Churches affections, who though ſhe had beene ill intreated by the *Watchmen* and others, yet is ſhe not diſheartned for all this? no, ſhe goes on and ſets out particular commendations of her Beloved. Where love hath any ſtrength, no water can quench it. You ſee the *Church* here found but cold intertainement from the *Watch-men* and others that ſhould have beene better.

That nothing can diſhearten the Church from commending Chriſt.

Nay, She was in deſertion, yet ſhe was not diſcouraged, nay not from the deſertion that Chriſt left her in; but ſhe ſeekes after him whom her ſoule loved. Oh, this is the ſigne of a true ſanctified ſoule toucht from Heaven, never to give over ſeeking of Chriſt, nor ſetting out his praiſes, no though it thinkes it ſelfe not beloved

Her inward deſertions diſcourage her not.

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beloved of Christ. Aske such ones doe you love God, his Children, and his Word? Oh you shall have them eloquent, no words are enough to set out their affections.

Reason of the first loves eagernesse.

And this is one reason, which we may note by the way, why God plants in his children, at their first conversion, a sweete love, which we call, *the first love*, that when desertions come they may call to mind what they felt from Christ, and what they bore to him; and thereupon the Church concludes, *Hos.2. I will returne to my first love, for then was I better then now.* The *Church* here from what doth shee commend her Beloved? but from some what that was left in her soule, some inward taste of the love of Christ in her, she called to mind how it was with her before in the former part of this, and in the latter end of the former chapter, what an excellent estate she had beene in, this helped her to recover her selfe.

Hos. 2.

Why the Church is so exact in particularising her Beloved

Now you may say, *Why is shee so exact in reckoning up so many particulars of her Beloved, his Head, Lockes, Eyes, Lips*, and such like?

1. *Because a large heart hath unsatisfied affections.*

Why, It is from largenesse of affection. *A large heart hath alway large expressions*, when we are barren in expressions towards Christ, and of good things, whence comes this but from narrow poore affections. The Church had large affections; therefore shee had sutable expressions.

2. *Because Christ hath not one but many excellencies in him.*

And then shee is thus particular, because Christ hath not one but many excellencies;

every

every thing in him is excellent: inward and outward, as his head,&c. For indeed beauty consists not in sweetnesse of colour onely, but in affinity and proportion of all parts. Now there is all sweet proportion in Christ, so it should be with Christians; they should not have one excellency, but many: those that receive *Grace for Grace* from Christ: have not onely Head, Eyes, Hands, and Feet good; but all lovely, *Grace for Grace*, answerable to the variety of Graces in Jesus Christ, In whom all things joyntly, and every thing severally are lovely.

Beauty wherin it consists.

Iob. 1.

Then shee sheweth her particular care and study, to be exact in this knowledge of Christ, to rip him up and anotomize him thus from *Head* to *foot*, it argueth shee had studied Christ well ere shee could attaine this excellencie: so it should be the study and care of every Christian, to study the excellencies of Christ, not onely in the grosse, to say as much as you have in the *Creed*; he was borne for us of the *Virgin Mary*, was crucified, dead and buried, *&c.* which every child can say, but to be able to particularize the high perfections and excellencies of Christ, as the Church here, to study his Nature, Offices, the State he was in, and how he carried himselfe in his humiliation and exaltation: what good we have by both states, *Redemption* by his *abasement*; *application of it by his advancement*. What he did for us on Earth, what he doth in Heaven: what in

3.

Because she had seriously and exactly studied Christ to purpose.

Iustification

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Iustification, Adoption, Sanctification, and in the glory to come. Study every thing and warme the heart with the meditation of them.

That al humane eloquence comes short of the excellencies of Christ.

This particular spreading and laying open the excellencies of Christ is a thing worthy of a Christian. Wee make slight worke of Religion, we can be particular and eloquent enough in other things, but in that wherein all eloquence is too little; how barren are we, how shamefac'd to speake of Christ and his excellencies in base company, as if it were a dishonour. Let us therefore learne this from the *Church here*, to be much in thoughts and meditations of the excellencies of Christ, and so our expressions will be answerable to our meditations. So the holy Fathers that were godly (till another kind of Divinity came into the world of Querkes and subtilties) there was none of them but was excellent this way. *Paul* admirable, accounting all dung and drosse in comparison of Christ. In speaking of him when he begins, he goes on from one thing to another, as if he were ravished; and knew not how nor where to end.

That the soule hath peculiar sights of its owne.

The soule hath sights of Christ that God shewes to it, and which the soule presents to it selfe by the helpe of the Spirit. The sights that God in this kind shewes, are to those in affliction especially, as *Daniell* and *Isay* saw Christ in his glory in a vision, so *Ezechiell* had a vision and *Iohn, Rev.* 1. where Christ was presented to him gloriously. So there is a glorious description

deſcription of Chriſt preſent to the Church, *Rev.* 4. 5.

And as there are ſights let downe from God into the ſoule, ſo there are ſights that the ſoule frames of Chriſt, ſuch as the Church here conceives of him by *faith*: Thus *Moſes* ſaw him before he was incarnate, and *Abraham* ſaw his day and rejoyced: ſo ſhould we now have ſpirituall ſights, *Ideas* of Chriſt framed to our ſoules, this is to beſtow our ſoules as we ſhould doe. So much for generall, now we come to ſome particulars. *His Head is as fine gold, his locke⁊ are buſhie and blacke as a raven.*

Sights of faith which the ſoule frames of Chriſt.

Iohn 8.

His Head is as fine gold.

He begins to ſet out the excellency of the cheefe part the Head. The Head of Chriſt is God, as it is 1 *Cor.* 11. 3. He is above all, and God onely is above him. All is yours, and you are Chriſts, and Chriſt is Gods, but that is not ſo much intended here, as to ſhew Chriſts head-ſhip over the Church as God and Man, his head is as fine gold, that is, his government and head-ſhip is a moſt ſweet and golden government.

1 Cor. 3. 22, 23.

Daniel. 2. You have an image of the Monarchies, the firſt whereof had a golden head, which was the *Chaldean*, the beſt Monarchy is ſet out by the beſt mettall gold, ſo Chriſt the head of the Church is a precious head, a head of Gold.

That a head of gold ſets forth Chriſts government.

Simile.

A Head hath an eminency above all others, an influence and motion above all other parts,

Ser. XVI.

it is the ſeat of the ſences, ſo this golden head is more eminent then all, governes the whole Church and hath influence into all; in him we live, and move, and have our beeing.

Acts. 17.

Queſt. *Why is Chriſt as King thus reſembled to an head of gold?*

Why Chriſt is ſet out by an head of gold.

Anſw. Becauſe Gold is the cheefe, the moſt precious, durable mettall of all others. Chriſt is a King for ever and hath an everlaſting government. Gold is alſo the moſt pliable mettall, you may beate it out to leaves more then any other mettall whatſoever. Chriſt is all gold indeed, his love hath beate himſelfe out as low as may be, all for our good. What abaſement like to Chriſts. That which is moſt precious is moſt communicating, as the Sunne a glorious creature, what doth ſo much good as it? ſo Chriſt as he is the moſt excellent of all, *the cheefe of ten thouſand*, ſo is he alſo the moſt communicative, what good to the good that Chriſt did, he was beaten out of love to man-kind to loweſt abaſement for us, though this be not mainely aimed at here, yet (by the way) ſpeaking of gold, we may preſent to our ſelves ſuch comfortable meditations.

Vſe. 1. *That there is no golden head o the Church but Chriſt.*

Well then is Chriſt ſuch an excellent head, a golden head, in whom are hid all the treaſures of wiſedome to governe his Church, what need we then goe to that triple crowne, having ſuch a golden head, the Apoſtacie of the Church hath found out another golden head, is not Chriſt precious enough. Let us take heed of leaving

leaving the head Christ, as it is *Col.*2.19. It is a damnable thing to forsake him. Let the Apostaticall Church alone with her Antichrist.

Againe, if Christ be a golden head, let us his members labour every one to be sutable, though there be difference betweene the head and the members in many respects, especially in those three formerly named, Eminencie, government, and influence, yet for nature they are one, head and members make but one. So that as the head of the body is gold, so should every member be: therfore the seven Churches are stiled seven golden candlestickes. Every thing in the Tabernacle was gold, even to the snuffers, to shew that in the Church every thing is excellent. The Tabernacle was gold most of it, though it was covered with Badgers-skins. The Church indeed hath a poore covering as of Badgers-skins, not guilded as hypocrites, but it is precious within; Againe, Christ as he is gold, so he is fine gold, whole gold, he hath not onely the crowne on him, but his head is gold it selfe. Other Kings their crownes are of gold, but their heads are not so: but there is such a precious treasure of wisedome in him that his head is gold; so let the Church and every Christian labour, not to be guilt but gold, to be thoroughly good, to have the inside as good as the outside, the heart as good as the conversation, the Church is glorious within, *Psal.*45. Beloved, Is Christ an excellent golden head and shall he have a base body? Is he fit to be

2. *We must be sutable to Christ our head.*

Simile.

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united to a golden head that is a common drunkard, a swearer, that is a beast in his life and conversation, is this sutable?

3. *To know that all our excellencies come from a golden head.* Rev. 4. 10.

Againe, Is our head so golden, and whatsoever excellency we have is it from our head, therefore as the Church in the *Revelation*, let us cast all our crownes at his feete. Have we crownes of gold, any thing that is excellent within, any grace, any comfort, let us lay it downe at his feet, for all is from him. Naturall men have golden images of their owne, *Israell* would have golden calves, *Nebuchadnezzar* sets up a golden image, and all must worship it, so in the declining times of the Church, they framed golden images, that is, a golden whorish religion, guilded, and painted, framed by their owne braine, whereunto all must stoope. But the true gold is that we must respect and submit our selves unto and admire, others are but golden dreames and images (as *Nebuchadnezzars* was) *Christs head alone is of fine gold*:

All must be fine gold that comes from this head, his word is gold, sometimes purged in the fire: his ordinances gold, in the scripture phrase, the city, the new Jerusalem which signifies the state of the Church in this world, when it shall be refined to the utmost, all is of gold, the walles of precious stones, the gates of pearle, and the pavement of the streetes of pure gold, to shew the excellency of reformation, which golden times are yet to come, in the meane time let us goe on and waite for them.

Psal. 19. 10.

Rev. 21. 21.

Rev 21.

His

His lockes are bushie and blacke as a raven.

I thinke this is but complementall to fill up the other, it is nothing but a commendation of his freshnesse, a foile to beauty, therefore not particularly to be stood upon.

His eyes are as doves eyes by the rivers of waters, &c.

His eyes are as doves eyes, and such eyes as are by the rivers of waters, where they are clensed and washed with milke that they may be the clearer, and fitly set, neither gogle eyes, nor sunke into the head, but fitly set, as a jewell in a ring, neither too much in, nor too much out, to set out the comelinesse of this part the eye which is the glory of the face.

Why is Christ said to have the eyes of doves? *Quest.*

The dove hath many enemies especially the white dove is a faire marke for the birds of prey, therefore God hath given that creature a quicke sight, that she might discerne her enemies, thus the Scripture helpes us to conceive of the quickenesse of Christs eye, *Rev.*5.6. there are seven hornes and seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God, here Christ the lambe hath seven eyes and seven hornes: what be these? Christ hath not onely hornes of power as the enemies have, hornes of violence, he hath horne against horne; but seven eyes, that is, a quicke sight to see all the danger the Church is in, and seven eyes; *seven* is a word of perfection, that is, he hath many eyes, an accurate sight, he hath not onely an eye of providence over the *Answ.*

whole world, but an eye of grace and favour, lively, and lovely in regard of his Church. All things are naked and open before his eyes, as it is, *Heb.*4. he can see through us, he knowes our very hearts and raines, which he must doe *ex officio*, because he must be our judge. He that is judge of all had need to have eyes that will pierce through all. It had need be a quicke eye that must judge of the heart and affections: but what may we learne hence, That we have a Saviour that hath doves eyes, that is, cleare eyes able to discerne.

*Vse.*1. *All comfort to the Church.* Ioh 22.

Take it as a point first, of all comfort to the Church, that when we have any imputation lies upon us, that we are thus and thus, Christ hath quicke eyes he knowes our hearts, *thou knowest* (saith *Peter*) *Lord that I love thee*, in all false imputations rest in the eye sight of Christ, he knowes it is otherwise with us.

*Vse.*2. *It is both comfort and terror.*

Then againe in all abasement know, that there is an eye that sees all, he sees with his eye and pitties with his heart, as he hath a quicke eye, so he hath a tender heart, though he seemes to sleepe and to winke, it is but that we may wake him with our prayers, which when we have done we shall see that Christ hath seene all this while, and that the violence the enemies of God have offered to his Church the Spouse hath beene in his sight, and that they shall know at length to their cost.

Likewise it is a point of terror to all hypocrites and others that thinke to blindfold Christ

againe,

againe. Can they blindfold him in Heaven that hath this ſharp eye? Noe he ſees all their courſes and projects what they are and what they tend to, and as he ſees them ſo he will ſpread them all open ere long.

And as it is a point of comfort and terror, ſo it is a point of inſtruction to us all, that wee having to deale with a judge that ſees all, to worſhip Chriſt in ſpirit. If we had knowledg that ſuch an eye of God is fixed upon us in all places, in all our affections and actions, would we give liberty to baſe and filthy thoughts, to cruell deſignes, and to trecherous aimes and intents, to hatch a hell (as it were) in our hearts, and to carry a fayre ſhew outwardly? it could not be. Men are not affraid of their thoughts, affections, deſires, and inward delights of their ſoule; becauſe there is no eye of juſtice upon them; but if they did conſider that the alſeeing God did obſerve theſe inward evills, and would call them to account one day for them, then they would be aſwell afraid to think ill as to doe ill.

Vſe. 3.
Inſtruction to us all.

His cheekes are as beds of ſpices, and as ſweet flowers.

Cheekes are the grace of the face, they are uſed here to denote the preſence of Chriſt, which is ſweete as ſpices and flowers; not only his preſence is glorious in Heaven, when we ſhall ſee that goodly perſon of Chriſt that became man for us, that transforming ſight that ſhall make us like himſelfe, but the ſpirituall preſence of Chriſt in his ordinances which

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wee are capable of here, this is as ſpices and flowers.

Object. But you will ſay, *Cheekes, face, and preſence preſents colours to the eye, and not ſmells, as ſpices and flowers which are the peculiar object of another ſence?*

Anſw. Oh but Chriſt is the object of all the ſenſes. Beloved, he is not onely beauty to the eye, but ſweetneſſe to the ſmell, and to the taſt; therefore faith hath the name of all the ſences, to ſee, heare, taſt, and ſmell, and doth all, becauſe it carries us to Chriſt, that is in ſtead of all to us, but the point is,

Obſerv. *That the manifeſtation of Chriſt to his Church and children by his Spirit in any of his ordinances, is a ſweet manifeſtation, and delectable as ſpices and flowers.* as it is, *Cant.* 1. 3. Becauſe of the ſavour of thy good ointments, thy name is as an ointment powred out, therefore the Virgins love thee. The very name of Chriſt when he is knowne and laid open by the miniſtry is a precious ointment, and the Virgins, that is all chaſt ſoules follow him by the ſmell of his ointments, all his ordinances convay a ſweetneſſe to the ſoule; his ſacraments are ſweete, his word ſweet, the communion of Saints ſweet. The preſence of the ſunne you know is knowne in the ſpring time, by the freſhneſſe of all things, which put forth the life, and little livelines they have in them, ſome in bloſſoming, and ſome in flowers, that which lay (as it were) dead in winter, it comes out when the ſunne drawes neere,

That all Chriſts ordinances are ſweet and lovely, and whatſoever proceed from them.
Simile.

neere: ſo when Chriſt comes and ſhewes his preſence and face to the ſoule, he refreſheth and delights it.

Hence we ſee they are enemies to Chriſt and to the ſoules of Gods people, that hinder the manifeſtation of Chriſt, whereby his face might be ſeene, and his lovely cheekes diſcerned: thoſe that hate and undermine the ordinances of God, they hinder the comforts of their owne ſoules.

And they are enemies to Chriſt, for when hath Chriſt glory but when the Virgins follow him in the ſent of his ſweet ointments, when the ſoule in the ſenſe of his ſweetneſſe followes him and cleaves to him with joy, love, and delight, this makes Chriſt Chriſt, and ſets him up in the heart above all others. This is the proper worke of the ordinances. Thoſe therefore that are enemies to the ordinances of Chriſt are enemies to the ſoules of Gods people, and to the glory and honour of Chriſt himſelfe.

Thus farre we may go ſafely upon
compariſon of this with
other Scriptures.

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The end of the ſixteenth Sermon.

THE

7 AP 53

THE SEVENTEENTH SERMON.

Cant. V. XIII.

His lips are like lillies dropping ſweet ſmelling mirrh, his hands are as gold rings ſet with Berill, his belly is as bright Ivory overlaid with Saphirs, his legs, &c.

IN ſpeaking of theſe particulars wee are to be very wary, for we have not that foundation as we have in other generalls: for no doubt but the Spirit of God here did more intend to ſet out the large affection that the Church had to Chriſt, then to inſinuate any great per-

particularity in every one of these, therefore let us onely cull out, and take those things that are of more easie explication.

His lips are as lillies dropping downe sweet mirrh.

That is, his doctrine is as sweet as the lillies, and sound as the mirrh, keeping from putrifaction, it being the nature of mirrh as it is sound its selfe so to make other things sound. In like manner the speech of Christ makes the soule sound that imbraceth it. What was ever more sweet then the truth of Christ, when he spake himselfe, they all hung upon his lips (as the Phrase is in the Gospell) as a man hangs upon the lips of another whom he desires and delights to heare speake, and they marvelled at the gratious words that came out of his lips, *Psal.*45. Grace was in his lips, all was sweet that came from him, for it came from the excellency of his Spirit, his words were died in these affections of his heart. In the learned language, the same word signifieth speech and reason, to intimate that speech is but the current of reason from the heart the seat of reason, therefore Christs speeches were sweet, because his heart was sweet, full of all love, grace, mercy, and goodnesse, his heart was a treasure, his lips must needs then be sweet. Beloved therefore let us hence take a triall of our selves what our condition is, whether the words that come from Christ when hee speakes in his ministery to us be sweet or not.

Luk.4. 20.

Mat.12.34,35.

The

1 King. 21. Mark. 6. 16. Acts. 2 22.

The word (to ſome kind of men) is like the Northern aire which parcheth and cutteth, *Ahab* could not indure the breath of *Elias*, nor *Herodias* the breath of *Iohn Baptiſt*, nor the *Phariſees* the breath of *Steeven* and *Paul*. So too many now a dayes cannot endure the breath of divine truth when it cuts and pierceth. Theſe wordes are arrowes that ſticke, if they ſticke not ſavingly, they ſticke to killing, if we cannot indure Chriſts breath we are not his Spouſe nor have any communion with him.

His lips are like lillies dropping ſweet mirrh, &c.

This is one excellency of Chriſt and of his truth, that it preſerves the ſoule in a pure eſtate, it is pure it ſelfe and ſo it preſerves the ſoule, mirrh is a liqour that keepes from putrifaction, there is nothing that keepes the ſoule but the word that indures for ever, whereas on the other ſide error is of a putrifying nature, corrupting and defiling the ſoule.

His hands are as gold rings ſet with Berill, &c.

Hands are the inſtruments of actions, Chriſts actions are pretious, whatſoever he doth to the Church, nay even when he doth uſe evill men to afflict and exerciſe the Church, he hath a hand there, a golden, a precious hand, in the evill hand of wicked men God doth all things by Chriſt, he is as it were Gods hand which all things paſſe through. *Ioſeph* was the ſecond man of *Egypt* through whoſe hands all things came to the reſt, ſo all things comes through Chriſts hands to us, and whatſoever is his handy

That all Chriſts actions whatſoever are precious. Heb. 1. Joh 5. 22.

handy worke is good, even as it is ſaid in the daies of his fleſh, hee did all things well, ſo ſtill in the Church all his workmanſhip is exceeding well, though we cannot ſee the excellency of it, it is all well both in the government of the Church and his workmanſhip in our hearts, the new creature.

His Belly is as bright Ivory overlaid, &c.

His Belly that is his inward parts, In the hebrew it is uſed for the inward affections, they are as bright Ivory overlaid with Saphires, that is they are pure, all the inſide of Chriſt, all his affections that he beares are wondrous good, his love, his deſires, his joyes, his hatred, all pure, like pure water in a cryſtall glaſſe, it may be ſtirred ſometimes but ſtill it is cleare, there are no dregs at the bottome, becauſe there was no taint of ſinne in him.

His legs are as pillars of marble ſet on ſockets of fine gold, &c.

All Chriſts wayes are conſtant & firme. Heb. 13.8.

That is, all his paſſages and waies are conſtant and firme even as pillars of marble, his children are ſo likewiſe as farre as they are indued with his Spirit. Chriſt is yeſterday, to day and the ſame for ever. In regard of his enemies, *Rev.* 1. Hee is ſet out in another manner of ſimilitude, as having legs of braſſe to trample them all in peeces. But in reſpect of his conſtant truth and waies of goodneſſe to his Church his legs are as pillars of marble.

His Countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the Cedars.

Lebanon

Lebanon was a goodly forreſt lying on the north ſide of *Iudea*, wherein were excellent plants of all kindes, eſpecially Cedars. Chriſt his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the Cedars, that is his preſence is goodly, ſtately and majeſticall, ſo it is and will bee when he ſhewes himſelfe indeed for the vindicating of his Church, then the enemies thereof ſhall know that his preſence is as *Lebanon, and excellent as the Cedars.*

In what regard Chriſtians are like unto Cedars.

The Children of God are like to Cedars too, for they are Chriſt myſticall. Other men are as ſhrubs to them, men of no value, but they are *Cedars*, and grow as *Cedars in Lebanon*, from perfection to perfection, bearing moſt fruit in their age. Wicked men ſomtimes are Cedars too and are ſaid to grow and flouriſh as the Cedars in Lebanon: But looke a while and you ſhall ſee their place no more, they have no good root, no good foundation, *A Chriſtian is a Cedar ſet in Chriſt the chiefe Cedar*, he is a plant that growes in him, he hath an eternall root and therefore he flouriſheth eternally.

How wicked men are ſaid alſo to be Cedars. Pſal 37.

His mouth is moſt ſweet, he is altogether lovely.

That the words of Chriſt whereby he manifeſts fatherly affection to us is of all things moſt ſweet.

His mouth is moſt ſweet, ſhe doubles this commendation, ſhee had ſaid before his lips are as Lillies dropping ſweete mirrh, here ſhe ſaith againe of his mouth, it is moſt ſweet, to ſhew that that is the cheefe lovely thing in Chriſt, the repetition argueth the ſerioufneſſe of the Churches affection to Chriſt and of the excellency of that part, the maine lovely thing is that which comes

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comes from his heart by his words and his lips, as indeed the most excellent thing that we can thinke of is the expression of the heart of God in Christ, and of Christs love to us, *His mouth is most sweet.* And indeed the best discovery of a true affection to Christ, and of a true estate in grace, is from our affection to the word of Christ. Whereſoever there is interest into Christ, there is a high respect to the word, *my sheepe heare my voice, Iohn.* 10. and you know what *Peter* saith, *Iohn.* 6. Many of Christs hearers and followers forsooke him (upon some hard speeches, as they thought that came from him) saith Christ to *Peter, Will yee also leave mee, Peter* answered againe, *Whether Lord shall wee goe, thou hast the words of eternall life.* The Apostles that had the Spirit of God perceived an incredible graciousnesse to sit on his lips, and therefore they hung upon his lips, *Whether shall we goe, thou hast the words of eternall life.* If we leave his speech we leave our comfort, we leave our life.

Ioh. 6. 68.

As a comment hereupon see *Psal.* 19. Where we have a high commendation of Gods excellencie, first from the booke of nature the workes of God, the Heavens declare the glory of God, then from the word of God, and herein the Psalmist is wonderous large. The law of the Lord is perfect coverting the soule, the testimonies of the Lord are sure making wise the simple, the statutes of the Lord are right and rejoyce the heart, the commandements

of

of the Lord are ſure, and enlighten the eyes more to be deſired then gold, yea then fine gold, ſweeter alſo then the hony or the hony comb.

But marke the order, when is the word of God precious as gold, ſweeter then the hony or the hony combe, but when the former commendation takes place, where the word is perfect converting the ſoule, and where it is ſure, making wiſe the ſimple, and where the feare of the Lord is cleane, *&c.* There it is more to be deſired then fine gold, and ſweeter then the hony combe. So the Church here finding firſt of all the word to be a converting word, and giving underſtanding to the ſimple, ſhe cannot but ſpeake of the ſweetneſſe of the word of Chriſt, his lips are as Lillies dropping ſweet ſmelling myrrh, his mouth is moſt ſweet. Thus a man may know his eſtate in grace by his reliſh of the word.

Queſt. *When the word of God is precious to us as gold*

Anſw.

That our ſtate in grace to the word may bee diſcerned by our reliſh to the word.

There is a divine and a heavenly reliſh in the word of God, as for inſtance take the doctrine of his providence, *That all things ſhall worke together for the beſt to them that love God.* What a ſweet word is this, a whole kingdome is not worth this promiſe: that whatſoever befalls a Chriſtian in this world, there is an over-ruling providence to ſway all to good, to help forward his eternall good.

Rom. 8. 28.

That Chriſt will be preſent with us in all conditions, what a ſweet word and promiſe is this, *That he will give his holy Spirit if we beg it, that*

Mat. 28. Luk. 11. 13.

he will not faile us nor forsake us. That if we confesse our sins and lay them open, he is mercifull to forgive them. That if our sinnes were as red as scarlet, they shall all bee white as woole. What kinde of incredible sweetnesse is in these to a heart that is prepared for these comforts, the doctrine of *Reconciliation*, of *Adoption*, of *Glory* to come, of the offices of Christ and such like, how sweet are they, they relish wondrously to a sanctified soule.

1 Iohn 1.9.

Isa. 1.

Exhortation to try our state in grace by our relish of divine truths.

Let us therefore discerne of our estate in grace by this, how do we relish divine truths? are they connaturall and suteable to us? doe we love them more then our appointed food? are they dearer unto us then thousands of gold and silver? doe we like them above all other truthes whatsoever? Every truth in its ranke is lovely and is a beame of God, *For truth is of God whereseever we finde it*, but what are other truths to this heavenly soule saving-truth, this Gospell-truth that is from Christ, *his mouth is most sweet.*

Psal. 119. 127. Psal. 119. 72.

That there is in our nature an Antipathy to divine truths.

In our nature there is a contrary disposition and Antipathy to divine truth. *We love the Law better then the Gospell, and any truth better then the Law.* We love a story, any trifling baubling thing concerning our ordinary callings, better then divine truth: *In divine truth as things are more spirituall, So the more remote they are naturally from our love and liking.* Evangelicall truths will not downe with a naturall heart, such an one had rather here a quaint point

poi nt of ſome vice or vertue finely ſtood upon then any thing in Chriſt, becauſe he was never truly convinced of his corrupt and miſerable eſtate by nature, but when the grace of God hath altered him, and his eyes are open to ſee his miſery, then of all truthes the truth of Chriſt ſavours beſt, thoſe truths that come out of the mouth of Chriſt & out of the miniſtery concerning Chriſt they are moſt ſweete of all. Oh how ſweete are thoſe words in the Goſpell to the poore man: *thy ſinnes are forgiven thee*, doe you thinke they went not to his heart. So to the woman, *Luk.7.* her many ſinnes are forgiven her, for ſhe loved much, Oh they were words that went to her ſoule. And to the theefe on the croſſe, *This day thou ſhalt be with me in Paradice*, how do you think thoſe words affected him. So it is with us if ever we have beene abaſed in the ſence of our ſinnes, O how ſweet is a promiſe of mercy then. *He that brings it is as one of tenne thouſand, that comes to declare to man his righteouſneſſe*, to lay open the mercy that belongs to a diſtreſſed ſoule, Oh the very feete of thoſe that bring theſe glad tidings are beautifull; When our bleſſed Saviour after his reſurrection ſpake to *Mary* and called her by her name, after that ſhe had ſought him and could not finde him (Oh Raboni ſaith ſhe) the words of Chriſt they melted her preſently. Let Chriſt once call us by our names, for he knowes us by name, as he knew *Moſes*, let him by his Spirit ſpeake to us by name, and

Luk.23.
Iob.33.23.
Rom.10,15.
Exo.34.
Iſa.43.1.

owne us then we call him *Raboni*, we owne him againe, for what is our love but the reflection of his backe againe. Therefore (saith the *Psalmist*) *Let me heare the voyce of joy and gladnesse that the bones that thou hast broken may rejoyce.* Psal. 51.

Let me heare, that is, I long for thy word to heare it, not the bare ministeriall word, but the word of the Spirit, but the Church resteth not here, but saith further,

He is altogether lovely.

Altogether desireable, as if she should say, what should I stand upon particulars, he is altogether from top to toe amiable, lovely and delectable.

He is altogether lovely.

That Christ every way considered is altogether lovely.

Lovely to God, to us, to the soule; lovely to him that can best judge of lovelinesse, the judgement of God I hope will goe currant with us, and what doth God the Father judge of Christ, *This is my beloved Sonne*, he is the Son of Gods love, *Colos.* 1. 13. (as God cannot but love his own image) He is *lovely also as man*, for he was pure and holy, lovely as *Mediator* by office, for he was anoynted by God to convcigh the Fathers love to us, *He must needs be lovely in whom all others are loved*, this is my beloved Sonne in whom I am well pleased, out of him I am well pleased with no body. And indeed he was filled with all graces that might make him lovely, all the treasures of wisdome are in him, and of his fulnesse we all receive grace for grace, he is made a store-house

of

of all that is good for us.

He is lovely to God in whatsoever he did, he carried himselfe lovely and pleased his Father in all his doings and sufferings. God loved him especially, *Because he was obedient even unto the death of the crosse, therefore God gave him a name above all names, that at the name of Iesus every knee should bowe both in Heaven and in Earth.* Phil. 2. As for the Angells they looke upon him with admiration, they attended him, and accounted it an honour to waite upon him, he is lovely to all above us, and shall he not be lovely to us.

But you will say, was he lovely when hee was nailed on the crosse, hung betweene two theeves, when he wore a crowne of thornes, was whipped, laid groveling on the ground, when he sweat water and bloud, what loveliness was in him when he was laid in his grave. Object.

Oh yes then he was most lovely of all to us, *By how much the more he was abased for us, this makes him more lovely, that out of love he would abase himselfe so low, when greatnesse and goodnesse meet together how goodly is it.* Answ. That Christ so great a Majesty should have such bowels of compassion. Majesty alone is not lovely, but awefull and fearefull, but joyned with such condescending grace is wondrous aimeable. How lovely a sight is it to see so great a person to be so meeke and gentle: it was so beyond comparison lovely in the eyes of the Disciples that they stood and wondered to see him who was

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the eternall word of the Father condeſcend to talke with a poore Samaritan woman, and what lovelineſſe of carriage was in him to *Peter* undeſerving after he had denied and forſworne him, yet to reſtore him to his former place that he had in his heart, loving him as much as ever he did before. In a word, what ſweetneſſe, gentleneſſe, bowels of meekeneſſe, pittie and compaſſion did he diſcover to thoſe that were in miſery, we cannot inſiſt upon particulars.

There is a remarkeable paſſage in the ſtory of *Alphonſus* the King (not very well liked of ſome) when hee ſaw a poore man pulling of his beaſt out of a ditch he put to his hand to helpe him, after which as it is recorded his ſubjects ever loved him the better, it was a wonderfull condeſcending, and is it not as wonderfull that the King of Heaven and Earth ſhould ſtoope ſo low as to helpe us poore wormes out of the ditch of hell and damnation, and that when he hath ſet us in a ſtate of deliverance, he ſhould not leave us there, but advance us to ſuch a ſtate and condition as is above our admiration, which neither heart can conceive nor tongue expreſſe, is not this wonderfull condeſcending.

Vſe. I. *That Chriſt is ſuch a Mediator as can quit his office.*

That we may further improove this point, Is Chriſt altogether lovely, ſo lovely to us and ſo beloved of God the Father? Let us then reſt upon his obedience and righteouſnes, build upon it that God cannot refuſe that righteouſneſſe whoſe

whose subject is altogether lovely. Let us come clothed in the garments of our elder brother, and then doubt not of acceptance: for it is in Christ that he loves us, in *this well-beloved Sonne* it is that God is well-pleased with us, if we put on Christs righteousnesse, we put on Gods righteousnesse, and then how can God hate us, no more then he hates his owne Sonne, nay he loves us, and that with the same love wherewith he loves him, for he loves whole Christ mysticall, head and members. Let this strengthen our Faith, that if Christ be so altogether lovely in himselfe and to the Father, then we may comfortably come before the Father, clothed with the garments of him our elder brother, and so rest our selves on the acceptation of his Mediation that is so beloved a Mediator. Iohn 17. 23.

Againe, if Christ be so lovely (altogether lovely) then let us labour to be in him, that so we may be lovely to God, because he is the first amiable thing in the world, in whom we are all lovely, all our lovelinesse is in beloved Christ. *Vse. 2. To labour to be in Christ that so wee may bee lovely before God.*

Againe, if Christ be so lovely, here onely we have whereupon to spend the marrow of our best affections. Is it not pittie we should loose so much of our affections as we doe upon other things, Christ is altogether lovely, why should we dote upon other things so much, and set up Idols in our hearts above Christ, is he altogether lovely, and shall not he have altogether *Vse. 3. To see then how and whereupon to spend our best affections.*

our lovely affections, especially when we are commanded under paine of a curse to love the Lord Jesus. *Anathema Maranatha* to those that love not Christ. Let us therefore labour to place all our sweete affections that are to be exercised upon good, as love, joy, and delight, upon this object, this lovely deserving object Christ, *who is altogether lovely*. When wee suffer a pure streame as it were to runne through a dirty channell, our affections to run after the things of the world, which are worse then our selves, we loose our affections and our selves.

1 Cor. 16. 22.

The way not to loose our affections.

Let therefore the whole streame of our affections be carried unto Christ. Love him and whatsoever is his, for he being altogether lovely, all that comes from him is lovely, his promises, his directions, his counsels, his children, his sacraments are all, lovely. Whatsoever hath the stamp of Christ upon it, let us love it, we cannot bestow our hearts better, to loose our selves in the love of Christ & to forget our selves and the love of all, yea to hate all in comparison of him, and to account all dung and drosse compared with Christ, is the only way to finde our selves. And indeed we have a better condition in him then in the world or in our selves: severed from him our condition is vaine and will come to nothing, but that we have in him is admirable and everlasting, we cannot conceive the happinesse which we poore wretches are advanced to in Christ, and what excellent

things

things abide for us which come from the love of God to us in Christ, who is so altogether lovely. Therefore let us labour to kindle in our hearts an affection towards Christ, all that wee can, considering that hee is thus lovely.

Vse. 4. *Whether or no Christ hee thus lovely to us.*

And let us make an Use of Tryall whether he be thus lovely to us, or no, we may see hence whether we love Christ or no, *We may judge of our love by our esteeme.* How doe we value Christ, what price doth the Church set on him? *He is the chiefe of tenne thousand.* What place then should he have in our hearts? *If he be the chiefe of tenne thousand, let us rather offend ten thousand then offend him.* Let us say with *David*, whom have I in Heaven but thee, *&c.* And when the soule can say to Christ or any that is Christs (for I speake of him in the latitude of his Truths, Promises, Sacraments, and Communion with his children) *What have I in Heaven but thee*, &c. then it is in a happy condition. If these things have the same place in our esteeme, as they have in respect of their owne worth, then we may say truely without Hypocrisie, *He is altogether lovely to us*, that we truly love him.

1. *By our esteeme of Christ.*

Psal. 73.

In the next place, are we ready to suffer for Christ? we see the Church here endures any thing for Christ, she was mis-used of the watchmen, they scorned her, and her *vaile* is taken away, yet notwithstanding she loves Christ still. Do we stand ready disposed to suffer for Christ,

2. *By our sufferings for Christ.*

Christ, of the world to be disgraced and censured, and yet are we resolved not to give over, nay doe we love Christ the more, and sticke to his truth the faster? Certainely where the love of Christ is, there is a spirit of Fortitude, as we may see in the Church here, who is not discouraged from Christ by any meanes, he is still the chiefe of tenne thousand, when she was wronged for seeking after him, yet hee was altogether lovely, whereas on the other hand, you have some that for frownes of greatnesse, feare of losse, or for hope of rising, will warpe their conscience and doe any thing. Where now is love to Christ and to Religion. He that loves Christ, loves him the more for his crosse, as the Holy Ghost hath recorded of some, that they rejoyced that they were thought worthy to suffer for Christ. So the more we suffer for him, the more deare he will be to us. For indeed he doth present himselfe in love and comfort most to those that suffer for his sake, therefore their love is increased.

3. *Love enlargeth the heart and tongue in the praises of Christ*

Againe, where love is, there it inlargeth the heart, which being enlarged enlargeth the tongue also. The Church hath never enough of commending Christ, and of setting out his praise, *the tongue is loosed, because the heart is loosed.* Love will alter a mans disposition, as we see in experience, a man base of nature, Love will make him liberall, he that is tongue-tied, it will make him eloquent, let a man

man love Christ, and though before he could not speake a word in the commendation of Christ, and for a good cause, yet (I say) if the love of Christ be in him, you shall have him speake and labour earnestly in the praises of God. This hot affection, this heavenly fire, will so mould and alter him, that he shall be cleane another man, as we see in the Church here, after that there was kindled a spirit of love in her, she cannot have done with Christ, when she had spoke what she could, she adds, he is altogether lovely. Those that cannot speak of Christ, or for Christ with large hearts in defence of good causes (but are tongue-tied and cold in their affections) where is their love? put any worldly man to a worldly theame that he is exercised in, and speakes of dayly, he hath wit and words at will, but put him to a theame of piety, you loose him, he is out of his theame, and out of his element. But tis not so with those that have ever felt the love of God in Christ, they have large affections, how full is Saint *Paul*, he cannot speake of Christ but he is in the *height*, *bredth*, *length*, and *depth* of the love of God in Christ, and the *knowledge* of God above all *knowledge*: thus we may discerne the truth of our love by the expressions of it here as in the Church.

Againe, the Church here is never content till she finde Christ, whatsoever she had, nothing contents her, she wanted her beloved, as we see here, she goes up and downe inquisitive after

4. *True love is never at rest till we finde Christ.*

after him till she find him, so it is with a Christian, if he have lost (by his owne fault) his former communion with Christ, he will not rest nor be satisfied, but searcheth here and there in the use of this and that meanes, he runs through all Gods Ordinances and meanes till he finde Christ, nothing in the world will content him, neither honour, riches, place, or friends, till he finde that which he once enjoyed, but hath now for a season lost, the comfort, and assurance of Gods love in Christ.

That contentment without Heavens sweet report of comfort to the soule is a dangerous condition.

Now if we can sit downe with other things and can want Christ and the assurance of salvation, that sweet report of the Spirit, that we are his, and yet be contented well enough, here is an ill signe, that a man is in an ill condition, the Church was not so disposed here, she was never quiet nor gives over her inquisition and speaking of Christ, that by speaking of the object, she might warme her affections, untill at the last she meets with Christ, these and the like signes there are of the truth of the love of Christ. But where there is a flaming love of Christ, there is this degree further, a desire of the appearance of Christ, a desire of his presence. For if Christ be so lovely in his Ordinances. If we finde such sweetnesse in the Word and Sacraments, in the communion of Saints, in the motions of the Spirit. What is the sweetnesse (thinke you) which the soules in Heaven enjoy, where they see Christ face to face, see him as he is, hereupon the Spouse saith,

A signe of true flaming love to Christ.

ſaith *Let him kiſſe me with the kiſſes of his mouth:* Oh that I might live in his preſence, this is the deſire of a Chriſtian ſoule. When the flame of love is kindled in any ſtrength, Oh that I might ſee him, and therefore it longs even for death, for as farre as a man is ſpirituall, he deſires to bee diſſolved, and to bee with Chriſt, as *Simeon*, when he ſaw him (though in his abaſement) *Now I have enough, let thy ſervant depart in peace, for mine eyes have ſeene thy ſalvation.* The preſence of Chriſt (though it were but in the wombe) When *Mary* the mother of Chriſt came to *Elizabeth*, it cauſed the Babe that was in her wombe to ſpring. Such comfort there is in the preſence of Chriſt (though he be but in the wombe) as it made *Iohn* to ſpring. What then ſhall be his preſence in Heaven, how would it make the heart ſpring there thinke you? For that which is moſt lovely in Chriſt is to come. Therefore the Saints that have any degree of grace in the new Teſtament, they are ſet out by this deſcription, they were ſuch as loved the appearing of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: how can it be otherwiſe, if they love Chriſt, they love the appearing of Chriſt, wherein we ſhall be made lovely, as he is lovely.

Here we are not altogether lovely, for we have many dregs of ſinne, many infirmities, and ſtaines, ſhall we not then deſire that time wherein as he is altogether lovely, ſo ſhall we be made a fit ſpouſe for ſo glorious a husband.

That our many infirmities and ſinnes ſhould make us long for that time wherin we ſhall be altogether lovely.

To

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To try our affections by the Churches affections.

To conclude this point, let us try our affections by the Churches affections in this place, whether Christ be so lovely to us or not, *Isa.* 5. 3. it is said there is no beauty in him, when we shall see him, and he was dispised of men, he was so in regard of his crosse, and sufferings to the eye of the world, and of carnall men. *Herod* scorned him, when *Pilate* sent him to him, made no body of him (as the word in the Originall is) they looked upon the outside of Christ in the flesh when he was abased. *There was no forme nor beauty in him* (saith the Holy Ghost) that is to the sight of carnall men, but those that had the sight of their sinnes with spirituall eyes, they could otherwise judge of Christ. The poore *Centurion*, saw an excellency in him, when he said, *He was not worthy that he should come under his roofe.* The poore theefe saw the excellency of Christ upon the crosse in those torments: *Lord remember me when thou commest into thy kingdome.*

So those soules that were inlightned, that had the sight of their misery and the sight of Gods love in Christ, had a high esteeme of Christ in his greatest abasement. Therefore if we have a meane esteeme of the children of God as contemptible persons, and of the Ordinances of God as meane things, and of the government of Christ (such as he hath left in his word) as base, it is an argument of a sinfull unworthy disposition in such a soule, Christ hath

hath never beene effectually by his Spirit, for every thing in him is lovely even the bittereſt thing of all. There is a majeſtie and excellency in all things of Chriſt, the cenſures of the Church are excellent, when they proceed and iſſue forth with judgement, as they ſhould doe, to deliver ſuch a man over to Satan, that he may be ſaved in the day of the Lord.

Now if the Ordinances of Chriſt, the Word and Sacraments, and the ſhutting ſinners out of the Church, if theſe things be vilified as powerleſſe things, it ſhewes a degenerate wicked heart not acquainted with the waies of God. If we have a meane eſteeme of men that ſuffer for Chriſt and ſtand out for him, if we account them ſo and ſo, ſhall we thinke our ſelves Chriſtians in the meane time, when Chriſt is altogether lovely, ſhall they be unlovely that carry the image of Chriſt, can we love him that begets and hate them that are begotten of him, can we love Chriſt and hate Chriſtians, it cannot be.

How to get and eſteeme of Chriſt.

Now that wee may get this affection and eſteeme of Chriſt, that is ſo lovely. Let us labour to make our ſinnes bitter and loathſome, that Chriſt may be ſweet.

I.
To make ſinne bitter.

Queſt. *VVhat is the reaſon we ſet no higher a price of Chriſt.*

Anſ. Becauſe we judge not of our ſelves, as we are indeed, and want ſpirituall eye ſalve to ſee into our ſelves rightly.

To attend on the meanes of ſalvation.

And let us attend upon the meanes of ſalvation to heare

heare the unsearchable riches of Christ: what makes any man lovely to us: but when we heare of their riches, beauty and good intent to us. In the Word we are made acquainted with the good intent of Christ towards us, the riches of mercy in forgiving our sinnes, and riches of glory prepared for us, the more we heare of him, of his riches and love to us, the more it will inflame our love to Christ. Those that live where the Ordinances of Christ are held forth with life and power, they have more heavenly and inlarged affections then others have, as the experience of Christians will testifie.

3. *To joyne with such company as highly esteeme of Christ.*

Againe, if we would esteeme highly of Christ that he may bee lovely to us, let us joyne with company that highly esteeme of Christ, and such as are better then our selves. What deads the affections so much as carnall, worldly company, who have nothing in them but civility, by converse with them who have discourse of nothing but the world, if a man have heavenly affections, he shall quickly dull them, and be in danger to loose them, they may be conversed with in civill things, but when we would set to be heavenly, and holy minded, let us converse with those that are of an heavenly bent, as we see here, *The daughters of Hierusalem* are wonne to love Christ? by what? By conversing with the Church, upon the discourse that the Church makes of his excellencies in particular, they beginne

ginne to aske where is Christ, as in the next Chapter, and so are all brought to the love of Christ.

* *
*

The end of the seventeenth Sermon.

7 AP 53

THE EIGHTEENTH SERMON.

CANT. V. XVI.

His mouth is most sweet, yea he is altogether lovely, this is my Beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Hierusalem.

CANT. VI. I, II.

Whither is thy Beloved gone, O thou faireſt among woemen, whither is thy Beloved turned aside that wee may seeke him with thee.

My Beloved is gone downe, &c.

BY this time the Church hath well quit her selfe in that safe subject, commending her beloved, first in generall, and then in particular; she affirmes (in effect) there

was none like him in generall, which she after makes good in all the particulars of her description, now she summes up all with a kinde of superaboundant expression. *What shall I say more of him? if that which is said be not enough, then know farther, he is altogether lovely, there were no end to goe through all his perfections, but looke on him wholly, he is altogether lovely, and therefore deserves my love, so that there is no cause why you should wonder at the strength of my affections and care to finde out this my Beloved and this my friend, O ye daughters of Hierusalem.* Thus we see how the pitch of an inlightned soule is bent, it aspires to things suteable to its selfe, to Godwards, to union and communion with Christ, to supernaturall objects, nothing here below is worthy the name of its beloved. It fastens not on earthly base things, but this is my beloved, and this is my friend, this so excellent a person, this *Iedidiah*, this beloved sonne, this judge of all, Lord of all, this chiefe of ten thousand, here the Church pitches her affections which she conceales not as ashamed thereof, but in a kinde of triumphing, boasting of her choice, she concludes all with a kinde of resolute assurance, that the object of this her choice is farre beyond all comparison.

This is my Beloved and this is my friend, O daughters of Hierusalem.

Which is the closing up of her commendations of Christ: *This is my Beloved and this my friend*, &c. Which shall onely be touched

because

becauſe we had occaſion to ſpeake thereof before. She cals Chriſt her beloved, howſoever he had withdrawne himſelfe in regard of the comfort and communion ſhe had with him before, *yet he is her beloved ſtill.*

That which is ſpecially to be ſtood upon is, that the Church here doth ſet out not onely in parcels, but in generall her beloved Chriſt: this is my beloved, ſhe doth as it were boaſt in her beloved, whence obſerve:

Obſerv. *A Chriſtian ſoule ſeemes to glory as it were in Chriſt.*

This is my beloved and this is my friend O *yee daughters of Hieruſalem:* but to unfold more fully this point, there be three or foure ends why the Church thus ſtands upon the expreſſing of the excellencies of Chriſt in particular and in generall.

Divers ends why the Church thus in generall and particular ſets forth the excellency of Chriſt.

The one, *To ſhew that it is moſt juſt that ſhe ſhould love and reſpect him in whom there is all this to deſerve love, both in himſelfe, in regard of his owne excellencies ſo and in relation to us, in regard of his merits and deſerts.*

1. *To ſhew how juſt it is to reſpect ſo excellent a perſon.*

Secondly, *To juſtifie her large affections before the world and all oppoſites.* For the world thinks, what meane theſe who are called Chriſtians to haunt the exerciſes of religion, to ſpend ſo much time in good things, they wonder at it for want of better information; now the Church here to juſtifie her large expreſſions, ſayes, *this is my beloved,* this is my friend, O ye daughters of *Hieruſalem.*

2. *To juſtifie her ſtrong affection to the ſtronger Chriſtians.*

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2. *To juſtifie her ſtrong affection to the ſtronger Chriſtians.*

3. *To boast and glory in God.*

And not onely to justifie, but *likewise to glory therein*, as you have it, *Psal.* 44. 8. the Church there boasts of God, *I will make my boast of thee all the day long*. So that Christians may not onely justifie their course of life against enemies, but in some sort boast of Christ, as *Paul* oft doth, and he shewes the reason of it, that God hath made Christ to us all in all, wisdome, righteousnesse, sanctification, and redemption, that whosoever glorieth might glory in the Lord: for is it not a matter of glorying in the Church when she hath such a head and such a husband? *This is my beloved*, the wife shines in the beames of her husband, therefore this yeelds matter not onely of justification but of glory.

4. *To enlarge her owne affections.*

And next in the fourth place, the Church is thus large and shuts up all with a repetition, this is my beloved, *To inlarge her owne affections and to feed her owne love*. For love feedes upon this fuell (as it were) upon expressions and meditations of the person or thing loved. Love is as it were wages of it selfe, the paines it takes is gaine to it selfe, to the Church here it is an argument pleasing, she dilates upon a copious Theame. I may truly say there is no greater comfort to a Christian, nor a readier way to inlarge the affections after Christ, then to speake oft of the excellencies of Christ, to have his tongue as the pen of a ready writer furnished this way, this is my beloved, &c.

That love is wages to it selfe

To aggravate her owne shame and unkindnesse in so sleighting Christs love.

In the fift place another end of this may be

to

to aggravate her owne ſhame, as indeed Gods children are much in this argument, that upon their ſecond thoughts of Chriſts worthineſſe and therewithall reflecting upon their owne unworthineſſe and unkindneſſe they may reliſh Chriſt the better. Therefore the Church here that it might appeare to her ſelfe for her humiliation how unkind ſhe had beene to ſhut the doore againſt Chriſt when he knocked, whereupon he deſervedly did withdraw himſelfe and made her ſeeke him ſo long ſorrowing, I tell you ſayes ſhe what a kinde of beloved he is, thus and thus excellent. How did the conſideration of Gods kindneſſe and love melt *Davids* heart after that horrible ſinne in the matter of *Vriah*, and the ſweet lookes of Chriſt upon *Peter*, that had beene ſo unkind, melted him. So here the Church when ſhe conſidered how unkinde ſhe had beene to Chriſt her beloved, ſo incomparably excellent above other beloveds, to let him ſtand at the doore, till his locks were wet with the Dew of the night. The conſideration hereof made her aſhamed of her ſelfe, what ſo excellent, ſo deſerving a perſon as my beloved is to me, to be uſed of me ſo? what indignity is this? Thus to raiſe up the aggravation of her unkindneſſe, no queſtion but the Church takes this courſe: for Gods children are not as untoward worldlings and hypocrits afraid to ſearch and to underſtand themſelves, the child of God loves to be well read in his owne heart and unworthy waies,

therefore he layes all the blame he can upon himselfe every way, he knowes he looseth nothing by this, for there is more mercy in Christ then there is sinne in him, and the more sinne abounds in his owne feeling, the more grace shall abound, he knowes the mysterie of Gods carriage in this kinde. Therefore for this end (amongst the rest) she sayes, this is my beloved, and this is my friend, whom I have so unkindly used.

To wind up the affections of her new beginning Christians.

And the last reason why the Church is thus large was, *To draw and wind up the affections of those well meaning Christians that were commers on, who were inquisitive of the way to Syon.* O ye *daughters of Hierusalem*, that you may know that there is some cause to seeke after Christ more then you have done before, I tell you what an excellent person my beloved is, to whet their affections more and more, and we see the successe of this excellent discourse in the beginning of the next Chapter, whether is thy beloved gone, *&c.*

These and the like reasons there are of the large expressions of the Church of the excellencies of Christ, this is my beloved, and this is my friend, Oh ye daughters of *Hierusalem.* But we will single out of these reasons for use that which I thinke fittest for us to make Use of.

Let us then oft thinke of the excellencies of Christ for this end, to justifie our endeavours and paines we take in the exercises of religion

and

and to justifie Gods people from the false imputations of the world, that they lay upon them, as if they were negligent in other matters, and were too much busied in spirituall things. You see how large the Church is in setting out the excellencies of her beloved, & then she shuts up all (being able to say no more) justifying our cause, This is my beloved, and this is my friend. Doe you wonder that I seeke so much after him then: or wonder you at Christians, when they take such paines to keep their communion with Christ in a holy walking with, and depending upon God. These are no wonders, if you consider how excellent Christ is, what he hath done for us, and what he keepes for us in another world, that he will preserve us to his heavenly kingdome, till he put us into possession of that glorious condition that he hath purchased. Let the hearts of men dwell upon the consideration of these things, and then you shall see that Gods children are rather to be blamed that they are no more carefull, watchfull, and industrious, then to be taxed that they are so much. Our Saviour Christ said, *Mat.* 11.19. Wisedome is justified of all her children. If you will make good that you are children of wisedome, you must be able to justifie the wisedome of God every way, to justifie your reading, hearing, your communion of Saints, to justifie all the exercises of Religion from an experimentall taste and sweetnesse of them, (as the Church doth here this is my beloved)

Mat.11.19.

What

SER. XVIII.

Ioth. 24. 15. What sayes *Ioshua*, this choice J have made, doe you what you will it matters me not, but I and my house will serve the Lord. So *Paul* makes a voluntary profession of his affection, *Rom.* 1.2. I am not ashamed of the Gospell of Jesus Christ, let the Gospell bee entertained in the world as it will, and let others thinke of me as they will, that I am forward in the preaching of it, I am not ashamed of it, and good reason he had not to be ashamed, for it is the power of God to salvation to all that beleeve, yea the saving power to us, and have not I cause to stand in the defence of it, and

2 Tim. 1. 11. so he saith the 2*Tim.* 1.12. *I know whom I have beleeved*, &c. I am not ashamed to suffer bonds for his sake. Though the world thought him a meane person, J will not be scorned out of my Faith and Religion by shallow empty persons, that know not what Christ and Religion meaneth. No, *I know whom I have beleeved; he is able to keepe that that I have committed to him against that day.* Let us therefore be able to justifie from a judicious apprehension sweet divine truths. You see what justifications there are of the Church of God, wherefore should the Heathen say, where is now their God, and *Psalme* 42.10. Oh it went to *Davids* heart, when they said where is now their God, what was become of his God when he was left in trouble, as the Church here, and what doth she answer, doth he let it goe with a question: No sayes she our God is in Heaven

Psal. 113 3. and

and hath done whatsoever he pleased.

The justificati- of religious indeavours is with disertion of opposite courses.

And this justification of Religion, you may know by this signe, it is with the disertion of all discourses opposite to Religion whatsoever, he that justifies the truth, he esteemes meanly of other courses and discourses. Therefore in the next verse the Church vilifies the Idols, our God is in Heaven and doth whatsoever he pleaseth: the Idols are silver and gold, the worke of mens hands, they have eyes and see not, eares and heare not. And the more wee justifie Christ the more we will be against Antichrist and his religion, wee may know the owning of the one truth by the vilifying the other. Let us labour therefore to grow to such a convincing knowledge of Christ, the good things in him, and the wayes of God, as wee may be able to stand our against all opposition of the gates of hell whatsoever.

To grow to know Christ more & his good things we must grow in admiration of them.

And to this end proceed in the study of Christ, and to a deeper search of him, and of the excellencies and good things in him, that we may say as *Micah* 7. Who is a God like to thee, that pardons sinnes and iniquities, and as *David Psalme* 113. Who is a God like our God that humbleth himselfe to behold the things done here below.

We must pray for the Spirit of Revelation.

And desire also to this purpose the Spirit of revelation, that which *Paul* prayes for *Ephes.* 1. and *Cap* 3 that we may know that knowledge that is above all knowledge, the heigth, depth, and breadth of Gods love in Christ. So sweet

is

is God in the greateſt abaſements of his children, that he leaves ſuch a taſte in the ſoule of a Chriſtian, that from thence he may be able to ſay, this is my beloved, when his beloved ſeemes not to care for him. When the Church ſeemed to be diſreſpected and neglected of Chriſt, yet ſhe ſaies, *This is my Beloved, and this is my friend, O ye daughters of Hieruſalem.*

That if worldly and wicked men boaſt of earthly things, much more ought wee of our portion in Chriſt.

Shall rich men boaſt of their riches, ſhall men that are in favour, boaſt of the favour of great perſons, ſhall a man that hath large poſſeſſions boaſt and think himſelf as good & as great as his eſtate is, ſhall a baſe minded worldling be able to boaſt: why boaſteſt thou thy ſelfe Oh mighty man? Nay you ſhall have malignant ſpirited men, boaſt of their malignant deſtructive power, I can do this and that miſchief, ſhall a man boaſt of miſchiefe, that he is able to do miſchief? and hath not a Chriſtian more cauſe to boaſt in God and in Salvation? Lord ſhine on me ſaies *David*, let me enjoy the light of thy countenance, and that ſhall bring me more joy then they have, when their corne and wine increaſeth: know this, as he goes on in the ſame Pſalme, that God accepts the righteous man.

Pſal. 52. 1.

Pſal. 4. 7.

That Chriſt reconciled is the beſt portion.

Therefore let us thinke we have much more cauſe to boaſt of God and of Chriſt in a ſpirituall manner, then the worldling hath of the world. Is not God and Chriſt our portion, and having Chriſt, have we not all things with Chriſt, put caſe all things be tooke from us; if a man have Chriſt, he is rich though he

he have nothing elſe, if he have all without him, His plenty is (as a Father ſaith, and as it is in truth) beggery. But whoſoever hath Chriſt may thus rejoyce with *David, The lot is fallen to me in pleaſant places, ye I have a goodly Heritage.* Would we have more then God in Chriſt, a ring with a Dyamond very precious in it, Now the *Daughters of Hieruſalem*, hearing this large expreſſion of affection, aske, Pſal. 16. 7.

Chap. VI. I.

Whither is thy Beloved gone O thou faireſt among women? whither is thy Beloved turned aſide that we may ſeeke him with thee?

HEere is another *Queſtion*, the firſt which the *daughters of Hieruſalem* aske is, what is thy beloved, wherupon the Church tooke occaſion to expreſſe what her beloved was, upon her expreſſion cloſing up all with this generall, *This is my Beloved and this is my friende.*

Then the ſecond *Queſtion is, whither is thy Beloved gone?* One queſtion begets another, and indeed if this queſtion be well ſatisfied what is Chriſt above others, this will follow againe, where is he? how ſhall I get him? how ſhall I ſeeke him? what is the reaſon this ſecond queſtion is ſeldome made? *Whither is he gone, how ſhall I get Chriſt?* Becauſe the former queſtion, namely, *What is Chriſt?* is ſo ſeldome

That a diſcovery of Chriſts excellencie muſt needs ſet us a work how to have him.

ſeldome made. For if we did once know what Chriſt is, we would be ſure with the *daughters of Hieruſalem* to aske whither is he gone, that we may ſeeke him with thee.

We ſee here is a growth in the deſires of the *Daughters of Hieruſalem*, whence wee learne,

Obſerv. *That grace, though it be in never ſo little proportion at the firſt, it is growing ſtill.*

That grace begets grace the flame once kindled will not out but be a burning and growing.

From the firſt queſtion, what is thy beloved, here is a ſecond (upon better information) *Whither is thy beloved gone, that we may ſeeke him with thee.* Nothing is leſſe then grace at the firſt, nothing in the world ſo little in proportion. The Kingdome of Heaven is compared to a graine of muſtard-ſeed, that is, the worke of grace in the heart, as well as in the preaching of the Goſpell, in the beginning is little. It is true of the worke of grace, as well as of the word of grace, that it is like a graine of Muſtard-ſeed at firſt, *what is thy beloved* enquires the Church at firſt, but when ſhe heares of the excellency of Chriſt; then *whither is thy beloved gone.* Grace begets grace, there is a connexion and knitting together in Religion, good things beget good things: it is a ſtrange thing in Religion, how great a matter ariſeth of a little beginning. The woman of *Samaria* had but a ſmall beginning of grace, and yet ſhe preſently drew many of her neighbours to beleeve in Chriſt. So *Andrew*, *Iohn* 1. As ſoone as he was converted he finds his brother

Mat. 13.

Simon

Simon and tels him that he had found the *Messias*, and so brings him to Christ, and *Philip* as soone as he had got a sparke of Faith himselfe, he drawes also *Nathaniell* to come to Christ. *Paul* speakes of his bonds, how the noise of them was in *Cæsars Court*, and many beleeved the very report, which howsoever it is not a working cause, yet it may be a preparing, inducing, leading cause to such things from one thing to another, till there follow this change and full conversion. You see here the *daughters of Hierusalem* growing, Therefore let us labour to be under good meanes. Some of the Romists and others which are ill affected and grounded in that point, they thinke that the efficacie of grace is, as we call it from the congruity, fitnesse, and proportion of the meanes to the heart and will of man, and thereupon God converts one and not another, because there is a congruous and fit offering of meanes to him, when he is fitly disposed, and another is not fitly disposed, therefore there followes not upon it effectuall calling, so that the vertue of the meanes offered depends upon sutableness and fitnes in the party to whom the meanes are offered, and not upon the power and blessing of God, verily this is plausible, and goes down very roundly with many weake persons: but this is a false and a grosse error: for unlesse God by his holy Spirit doe worke by the meanes, no planting and watering will bring any increase and change the heart and minde, though

Phil. 1. 13.

An error of the Papists, touching the efficacy of grace in congruity.

That the meanes without a distinct consisting worke can doe nothing.

though there were greater meanes in Christs time, when he wrought these miracles then any time before, yet all those could not convert that froward generation: and it was *Moses* complaint in the wildernesse, where they had aboundance of meanes: God hath not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and eares to heare untill this day. When a man is planted under good meanes and frequents them, then ordinarily it pleaseth God by the inward workings of his owne powerfull Spirit to worke greater matters, and those that keepe out of Gods reach, that will not come into places where they may heare good things, there is no hope of them, though there be many ill fish in the net, yet there is no hope to catch them that are without the net. So those that are kept out of all opportunities and occasions whereby Gods Spirit may worke upon them, there is no hope of them.

Deut. 29. 4 *That usualy God workes with the means.*

Let us learne this heavenly wisedome to advantage our selves this way, by improoving all good opportunities whatsoever wherby we may learne, for God works by outward meanes: good company, and good discourse, these breed excellent thoughts. As therefore we love our soules, take all advantages wherein the Spirit of God works, we shall find incredible fruit thereof, more then we would beleeve, but to come to the Question.

See here first of all in this Question, the blessed successe of the Churches inquiry after Christ

Christ in *the daughters of Hierusalem*; after they heard the large explications of the excellencies of Christ, especially by the Church, whom they had a good conceit off, for they call her, *the fairest among woemen.*

And seeing likewise the confidence of the Church, she stands to it, *this is my beloved*, yea also eagerneſſe in the Church, to seeke after him they would seeke him with her, so that where these meet, a large unfolding of the truth of God, and that by persons that are knowne to be good, well accepted and conceited off, and where there is a large demonstration of reall affection, and the things are spoken off with confidence, as knowing what they say, the word (I say) so managed it is never without wondrous succeſſe.

That demonstrative affectionate confident explication of Christ, is never without wondrous succeſſe.

For in the course of reason, what can I have to say, considering the party, who speakes is an excellent person, he is wiser and holier then I, he takes to heart these things, and shall not I affect that which those that have better parts and graces doe?

1.

Then withall I see not onely excellent persons doe it, but I see how earnest they are, surely there is some matter in it; for persons so holy, so wise, and gratious to bee so earnest, surely either they are too blame, or I am too dull and too dead, but I have most cause to suspect my selfe.

2.

And to see them carried with a spirit of confidence, as if they were well enough adviſed

3.

when they deliver this (*this is my Beloved*) in particular, and then to ſhut up all in generall, *This is my beloved, and this is my friend:* I ſay, when there is grace and life in the heart, and earneſtneſſe with confidence: this together with the explication of the heavenly excellencies of Chriſt, and of Religion, it hath admirable ſucceſſe, as here in the Church, *the faireſt among woemen, the daughters of Hieruſalem*, ſeeing the Church was ſo earneſt, confident and ſo large in the explication of the excellencies of Chriſt, ſee how it works, it drawes out this Queſtion with reſolution, they joyne with the Church in ſeeking Chriſt. *Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou faireſt among woemen? whether is thy beloved turned aſide, that we may ſeeke him with thee?* Where by the way obſerve, as the Church before doubles it, this is my beloved, and this is my friend: ſo they anſwer with a double queſtion, *whether is thy beloved gone, whether is he turned aſide, O thou faireſt among woemen*, &c. from this appellation note, If we would be happy inſtruments to convert others, being converted our ſelves, *labour to be ſuch as the world may thinke to be good and gratious: O thou faireſt among woemen.* Faire in the robes of Chriſt tooke out of his wardrop, all the beauty and ornaments that the Church hath, ſhe hath from Chriſt, let us labour to be ſuch as the world may conceit are good perſons. We ſay of Phiſitians, when the patient hath a good conceit of them the cure is halfe

How to be happy inſtruments to convert others.

To be ſuch as the world may think to be good and gratious.

halfe wrought: So the Doctrine is halfe perſwaded, when there is a good conceit of the ſpeaker.

Againe, labour to be earneſt: if we would kindle others; we muſt be warmed our ſelves, if we would make others weepe, we muſt weepe our ſelves, naturaliſts could obſerve this, the Church ſpake this with large expreſſions, indeed more then can be expreſt: let us labour to be deepely affected with what we ſpeake, and ſpeake with confidence, as if we knew what we ſpoke, as the Apoſtle *Iohn* doth, in the beginning of his Epiſtle to bring others to be better perſwaded of his doctrine, he affirmeth that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have ſeene with theſe our eyes, which we have looked upon, and theſe hands of ours have handled of the Word of life he delivered to them. 1 Ioh. 1.1.

To be earneſt in thoſe things we would inforce upon others.

For when we are confident from ſpirituall experience; it is wonderfull how we ſhall be inſtruments of God to gaine upon others. So *Peter*, we followed not (ſaies he) deceiveable fables, when we opened unto you the power and comming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but with our eyes we ſaw his Majeſty. 2 Pet. 1.16.

Doe not thinke it belongs onely to the miniſtry, there is an art of Converſion that belongs to every one that is a growne Chriſtian to winne others.

VVhither is thy Beloved gone, O thou faireſt among woemen.

Serm. XVIII.

The next observation out of the words (because it is the especiall) which works upon the daughters of *Hierusalem*, is from the large explication of Christ,

Observ. *That which most of all stirrs up holy affections to search after Christ, is the large explications of his excellencies.*

That we ought to be in love with the ministry of the word, whereby the excellency of Christ is set foorth. Pro. 10.20.

Then be in love with the ministry of the Gospell, and the communion of Saints, who have their tongues and their hearts taught of God to speake excellently, their tongues are as refined silver, their hearts are enriched to increase the communion of Saints. Marke this one excellency of that excellent ordinance of God in Christ, whereof *Paul* saith, *Ephes.3. To me is committed this excellent office to lay open the unsearchable riches of Christ*, such riches as may draw you to wonder, such as eye hath never seene, nor eare heard, nor hath entred into the heart of man to conceive, and so to draw the affections of people after them.

2 Cor. 5.

That because the speciall office of the ministery is to unfold Christ, therefore all our discourse should tend this way in some sort.

And because it is the speciall office of the ministry to lay him open, to hold up the tapistry, to unfold the hidden mysteries of Christ, labour we therefore to be alway speaking somewhat about Christ or tending that way, when we speake of the Law, let it drive us to Christ, when of Morrall duties, to teach us to walke worthy of Christ. Christ, or somewhat tending to Christ should be our theame and marke to ayme at.

Therefore what shall we judge of those that are

are hinderers of this glorious ordinance of Christ in the Gospell, they are enemies of conversion and of the calling of Gods people, enemies of their comfort: and what shall wee thinke of those wretched and miserable creatures, that like *Caine* are vagabonds, who wander and will not submit themselves to any ordinance meekely, but keepe themselves out of this blessed opportunity of hearing the excellencies of Christ, which might draw their hearts to him, we are made forever, if Christ and we be one, if we have all the world without him it is nothing, if we have nothing in the world but Christ, we are happy. Oh happy then when this match is made betweene Christ and the soule, the friends of the Bride and of Christ, they laying open the unsearchable riches of Christ to the Spouse, drawe the affections, worke faith, and so bring the Bride and the Bridegroome together.

Thus farre of the Question: now we have the Churches answer to the *daughters of Hierusalem.*

My Beloved is gone into his Garden, to the beds of Spices, to feede in the gardens, and to gather Lilies.

The Question was not for a bare satisfaction, but from a desire the Church had to seeke Christ, whither is thy beloved gone that we may seeke him. It was not a curious question, but a question of inquisition tending to practise, many are inquisitive, but when they know an-

other mans meaning, it is all they desire: now I know your meaning will they say, but I meane not to follow your counsell. The *daughters of Hierusalem* had a more sincere intention, O thou faireſt among woemen, whither is thy beloved turned aside; that we may seeke him with thee, whereunto the Church answered,

That there ought to bee no envy in spirituall things which may indifferently be devided alike to all.

My Beloved is gone into his Garden to the beds of spices, to feed in the Gardens, Where we see,

The Church is not squemish, but directly answers to the question, for there is no envy in spirituall things, because they may be devided in *solidum*, one may have as much as another, and all alike. Envy is not in those things that are not divisible in other things, the more one hath, another hath the lesse. But there is no envy in grace and glory, because all may share alike, therefore here is no envy in the answer, as if she deni d the *daughters of Hierusalem* the enjoying of her beloved; no if you will know (saies she) I will tell you directly whither my beloved is gone.

My Beloved is gone into his garden to the bed of spices, &c.

God hath two gardens, the Church Catholike is his garden, and every particular Church are gardens and beds of spices, in regard that many Christians are sowne there that Christs soule delights in, as in sweet spices. This was spoken off before at large in *Chapter* 5.1. why the Church is called a garden being a severed place from the waste: the Church is severed from

from the wilderneſſe of the world in Gods care and love, likewiſe he tends and weeds his Church and garden: as for the waſte of the world, he is content the wilderneſſe ſhould have barren plants: but he will not endure ſuch in his garden; therefore thoſe that give themſelves liberty to be naught in the Church of God, he will have a time to roote them out: Trees that are not for fruit, ſhall be for the fire, and above all other Trees their doome ſhall be the heavieſt that grow in Gods garden without fruit: that fig-tree ſhall be curſed. Luke 13.

Men are pleas'd with anſwering the bill of accuſation againſt them thus; are we not baptiſed? and doe we not come to Church? &c. what doe you make of us, yet they are abhominable ſwearers and filthy in their lives. To ſuch I ſay, the more God hath lift you up, and honoured you in the uſe of the meanes, the more juſt ſhall your damnation be, that you bring forth nothing but briers and brambles, the grapes of *Sodome* and the vine of *Gomorrah*: heavy will the doome bee of many that live in the Churches boſome, to whom it had beene better to have beene borne in *America*, in *Turkey*, or in the moſt barbarous parts in the world: they have a heavie account to make that have beene ſuch ill proficients under abounda nce of meanes, therefore it ought to bee taken to heart. Heb 6. Deut. 32. 32.

The folly and madnes of ſuch who pleade they are ſpices and plants of Gods garden, whilſt they live in all profaneſſe.

My Beloved is gone into his garden to the beds of ſpices to feed in the gardens and to gather Lillies.

That Christ looks for Lillies to plant them in his garden, delight in them, and transport them into Heaven.

Two Paradises

And to gather Lillies.

That is having first planted them *Lillies* here, to gather them, and to transport them out of the garden here, to the garden in Heaven, where there shall be nothing but Lillies. For the Church of God hath two Gardens or Paradises since the first Paradise (whereof that was a resemblance) the *Paradise* of the Church, and the *Paradise* of Heaven. As Christ saith to the good theefe, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise. So those that are good plants in the Paradise of the Church, they shall be glorious plants also in the Paradise of Heaven, we must not alway be here, we shall change our soyle and be taken into Heaven: *He is gone into his garden to gather Lillies.*

I.
In what respects Christians are compared to Lillies for purity, whitenesse, and unspottednesse.

Christians are compared to Lillies for their purity and whitenesse unspotted in justification, and for their endeavours in sanctity and holinesse, wherein also at length they shall be wholy unspotted, it is the end, (*Ephes.* 1.4.) they are chosen too, to be holy without blame, before him in love. God and Christ looks upon them without blame, not as they are here defiled and spotted; but as they intend by little and little to purge and purifie themselves by the Spirit that is in them, that they may be altogether without blame. They are Lillies being cloathed with the white garments of Christs righteousnesse, not having a naturall whitenesse and purity: the whitenesse and purity of Gods children is borrowed, all their beauty and garments are taken out of anothers wardrope, the

Church

Church is all glorious within: but she borrowes her glory, as the Moone borrowes all her light from the Sunne, the Churches excellency is borrowed, it is her owne but by gift, but being once her owne it is her owne for ever.

The Church before was likened to a garden culled out, an *Eden*, a Paradise, now there you know were foure streames, sweet and goodly rivers which watered Paradise, the heads of which rivers were without it. So the Church of God, her graces are her owne, that is the Spirit of God comes through her nature, purgeth and purifieth it, but the spring of those graces (as in Paradise) is out of her selfe.

2. *Because it is a tall goodly plant.*

And then the *Lilly* is a tall goodly plant, therefore the Church is compared to them: other men are compared to thornes, not onely for a noxious, hurtfull quality in them, but for their baseneſſe likewise, what are thornes good for, but to cumber the ground, to eate out the heart of it, to hide snakes, and for the fire. Wicked men are not Lillies but thornes, they are base meane persons. *Antiochus* is said to be a vile person though he were a King, because he was a naughty man. Wicked men though they be never so great being void of the grace of God are vile persons, though we must respect them in regard of their places, yet as they are in their qualification, they are vile and base thornes, but the Church is not so, but as a Lilly among thornes, that is among vile and abhominable persons. Dan. 11. 21.

The

SER. XVIII.

Vse. 1. *Comfort Gods children.*

The Use is to comfort Gods children, they have an excellency and glory in them, which howsoever it is not from them, yet it is theirs by gift and eternally theirs: therefore let them comfort themselves against all the censures of sinnefull persons that labour to trample them under foote, and thinke basely and meanely of them, as of the off-scowring of the world. Let the unworthy world thinke of them as they will, they are Lillies in Gods esteeme, and are so indeed, glorious persons that have the Spirit of glory resting upon them, and whom the world is not worthy off, though their glory be within: therefore let us glory in it, that God vouchsafeth saving-grace to us above any other priviledge.

1 Pet. 4. Heb. 11.

Vse. 2.

Againe, it comforts us in all our wants whatsoever, that God will take care for us: Christ useth this argument: God saith he, clotheth the lillies of the field with an excellent beauty, he cares even for the meanest plants, and will he not take care for you O ye of little faith? doth he care for Lillies that are to day and to morrow are cast into the oven: and shall he not care for the lillies of Paradise, the living lillies, those holy reasonable lillies? undoubtedly hee will. Our Saviour Christs reason is undeniable, he that puts such a beauty upon the poore plants that flourish to day in the morning and wither before night, he that puts such a beauty upon the grasse of the field, will he not put more excellency upon his children, will he

Mat. 6. 29.

he not provide for them, feed them, undoubtedly he will: thus we have shewed why Gods children in the Church of God are compared to Lillies.

To gather Lillies.

Christ is said to gather these Lillies, that is, he will gather them together, Christ will not have his lillies alone scattered, though hee leaves them oft alone for a while, yet he will gather them to Congregations and Churches: the name of a Church in the Originall is *Ecclesia*, it is nothing but a company gathered out of the world. Do we thinke that we are lillies by nature; no we are thornes and briers, God makes us lillies and then gathers us to other lillies, that one may strengthen another. The Spirit of God in his children is not a Spirit of seperation of Christians from Christians, but a spirit of seperation from the waste wild wilderneſſe of the world, as we say of fire, *Congregat homogenea & disgregat heterogenea*, it congregates all homogeniall things, as gold, which it gathers, but disgregates heterogeniall things, consumeth drosse; so the Spirit of God severs thornes and gathers lillies, gathers Christians together in the Church and will gather them for ever in Heaven.

That Christs Lillies shall not lie scattered but he will gather them together.

Thus we see the answer of the Church to the *daughters of Hierusalem*, what it was, with the occasion thereof: the question of the *daughters of Hierusalem whither is thy Beloved gone?* so that the Church was beholding to the

That the issue of fruitfull conference is great at last, though flat and dull at beginning.

the *daughters of Hierusalem* for miniſtring ſuch a queſtion to give her occaſion to know better what her beloved was, indeed we many times gaine by weaker Chriſtians, good queſtions, though from weake ones, miniſter ſuteable anſwers, it is a greeke Proverbe, that *doubting begets plenty and aboundance*, for doubting at the firſt begets reſolution at laſt. O that we could take occaſion hence, to thinke of this, what excellent vertue is in the communion of Saints, when they meet about heavenly exerciſes, what a bleſſing followes, when though at the entry, their affections may be flat and dull, yet they part not ſo, Chriſt heates and inflames their hearts to doe much good to one another. O thoſe that ſhall forever live together in Heaven ſhould they not delight to live more together on earth.

The end of the eighteenth Sermon.

THE NINETEENTH SERMON.

Cant. VI. II.

I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine, he feedeth among the Lillies.

THese words are a kinde of triumphant acclamation upon all the former passages, as it were the foot of the Song, for when the Church had spoken formerly of her ill dealing with Christ, and how he thereupon absented himselfe from her, with many other passages, she shuts up all at last with this, *I am my Beloveds*

loveds and my Beloved is mine.

Now she begins to feele some comfort from Christ, who had estranged himselfe from her, O, (saith she) notwithstanding all my sufferings, desertions, crosses, and the like, *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine.* Words expressing the wondrous comfort, joy, and contentment, the Church now had in Christ, having her heart inflamed with love unto him, upon his manifesting of himselfe to her soule, *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine, hee feedeth among the Lillies.*

There is a mutuall intercourse, and vicissitude of claiming interest betwixt Christ and his Church, I am Christs and Christ is mine, I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine.

From the dependance and order of the words, comming in after a desertion for a while, observe,

Observ. *That Christ will not be long from his Church.*

The spirituall desertions (forsakings as we use to call them) howsoever they be very irksome to the Church (that loves communion with Christ) and to a loving soule, to be deprived of the sence of her beloved, yet notwithstanding they are but short, Christ will not be long from his Church, his love, and her desire will not let him, they offer violence, why art thou absent (say they) why art thou so farre off, and hidest thy selfe? *Ioseph* may conceale himselfe for a space, but he will have much adoe so to hold long, to be straightned to his

Why Christ cannot be long absent from his Church.

his brethren, paſſion will breake out. So Chriſt may ſeeme hard to be intreated, and to croſſe his owne ſweet diſpoſition, as to the woman of *Caanan*, but he will not long keepe at this diſtance, he is ſoone overcome, O woman great is thy Faith, have what thou wilt, when ſhe ſtrove with him a little (as Faith is a ſtriving grace) ſee how ſhe did winne upon him. So the *Angell* and *Iaacob* may ſtrive for a while, but *Iaacob* at the length prooves *Iſrael*, he prevailes with God. So it is with the Chriſtian ſoule and Chriſt, howſoever there be deſertion (for cauſes before mentioned) becauſe the Church was negligent (as we heare) and partly for the time to come, that Chriſt by his eſtrangement might ſweeten his comming againe, howſoever there may be ſtrangeneſſe for a time, yet Chriſt will returne againe to his Spouſe.

Vſe. 1. *Conſolation to ſupport us in deſertion.*

The Uſe ſhould be, not onely *for Comfort, to ſtay us in ſuch times, but to teach us likewiſe to waite and never give over,* If the *Church* had given over here ſhe had not had ſuch gratious manifeſtations of Chriſt to her: learne hence therefore this uſe, to waite Gods leaſure. God will waite to doe good to them that waite on him: if we waite his leiſure, he will waite an opportunity of doing good to us, when God ſeemes not to anſwer our prayers, let us yet waite, we ſhall not looſe by our tarrying, he will waite to doe us good. Iſa. 30 18.

In the next place obſerve after this temporary

trary desertion, Christ visits his Church with more aboundant comfort then ever before.

That wee loose nothing by our largenesse of affection to Christ for his returne to ours is exceeding ours.

Now the Church cannot hold, *My Beloved is mine and I am his*, and Christ cannot hold, but fals into a large commendation of his Spouse backe againe; as she was large in his commendations, so he is large in hers, and more large, he will have the last word, therefore learne by this experience: that all things worke together for the best to them that love God: all things. What evill? I evill; why even sinne turnes to their humiliation, yea and disertion (those spirituall ills) turnes to their good, for Christ seemes to forsake for a while that he may come after with more aboundance of comfort, when once he hath enlarged the soule before with a spatious desire of his comming, to say, O that he would come, when the soule is thus stretched with desire in the sence of want, then he fils it againe till it burst foorth, *My Beloved is mine and I am his*: it was a good experiment of *Bernard*, an holy man in ill times *tibi accidit*, &c. speaking of Christs dealing with his Church, he comes and he goeth away for thy good, he comes for thy good to comfort thee, after which if thou be not carefull to mainetaine communion with him, then he goeth away for thy good to correct thy error, and to enlarge thy desire of him againe, to teach thee to lay sure and faster hold upon him when thou hast him, not to let him goe againe.

Rom. 8. 28.

If

SER. XIX.

That after seeking of Christ in all his means we must waite for him

If you would see a paralell place to this, looke in *Cant.* 3. where there is the like case of the Spouse and Christ, *By night on my bed I sought him*, the Church sought Christ not onely by day but by night, *I sought him whom my soule loved*, though she wanted him, yet *her soule loved him* constantly, though a Christians soule have not present communion with Christ, yet he may truely say, my soule loves him, because she seekes him diligently and constantly in the use of all the meanes, so we see the Church before my text, cals him my beloved still though she wanted communion with him, well she goes on, *I sought him, but I found him not*, would the Church give over there? no, then she riseth and goeth about the citty and about the streets and *seekes him whom her soule loved*, seekes him and will not give over. So I sought him (but I wanted the issue of my seeking) I found him not, what comes upon that, *The Watchmen goe about the City and find her*, of whom, when by her own seeking she could not finde Christ, she inquires, *Saw you him whom my soule loveth*, she enquires of the Watchmen, the guides of Gods people, who could not satisfie her fully, she could not find her beloved, yet what doth she, she shewes *Verse* 4. It was but a little that she stayed (after she had used all meanes private and publike, *in her bed*, out of her bed, by the *Watchmen* and others: yet saith she, it was but a little that I was past from them, she had not an answer

This is the surest token of our fervent love to Christ.

preſently, though the Watchmen gave her ſome good counſell, it was not preſently, yet not long after. Chriſt will exerciſe us a while with waiting *It was but a little that I paſſed from them, but I found him whom my ſoule loved.* After all our ſeeking there muſt be waiting, and then we ſhall finde him whom our ſoule loveth: perhaps we have uſed all meanes private and publike, and yet finde not that comfort we look for, O but waite a while, God hath a long time waited for thee, be thou content to waite a while for him, we ſhall not looſe by it, for it followes in the next verſe, after ſhe had found him whom her ſoule loved, *I held him, I would not let him goe,* ſo this is the iſſue of deſertions, they ſtirre up diligence and ſearching in the uſe of meanes private and publike, and exerciſe patience to waite Gods leiſure, who will not ſuffer a gratious ſoule to faile of its expectation, at length he will fulfill the deſires of them that feare him, and this comes of their patience, grace growes greater and ſtronger, *I held him and would not let him goe, untill I had brought him unto my mothers houſe.* Thus you ſee how the Spirit expreſſeth the ſame truth in another ſtate of the Church Compare place with place. To goe on,

If God waite long for us, it is equity to waite for him.

Pſal. 145.

I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine.

The words themſelves are a paſſionate expreſſion of long lookt for conſolation. Affecti ons have eloquence of their own beyond words feare hath a proper expreſſion, love vents it ſelfe

in

broken words, & sighs, delighting in a peculiar eloquence suitable to the height and pitch of the affection, that no words can reach unto, so that here is more in the words breath'd from such an inflamed heart then in ordinary construction can bee pickt out (*I am my Beloveds*, &c) comming from a full and large heart, expressing the union and communion between Christ & the Church (especially after a desertion) *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine.*

That there must be union of persons, before union and communion of graces with Christ.

First, (I say) the union, *viz.* the union of persons which is before all comfort and communion of graces, *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine*, Christs person is ours, and our persons are his: for as it is in marriage, if the person of the husband be not the wives, his goods are not hers, nor his titles of honour; for these come all to her, because his person is hers, he having passed over the right of his owne body and of his person to his wife, as she hath passed over all the right of her selfe to her husband: so it is in this mysticall marriage that that intitles us to communion of graces is union of persons betweene Christ and his Church, *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved himselfe is mine*; And indeed nothing els will content a Christians heart, he would not care so much for Heaven it selfe, if he had not Christ there; the Sacrament, Word, and Comforts why doth he esteeme them, as they come from Christ and as they leade to Christ, it is but an adulterous and base affection to love any thing severed from Christ.

SER. XIX.

That from unio of persons comes communion of all other things whatsoever.

Now from this union of persons comes a communion of all other things whatsoever, *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine*, if Christ himselfe be mine, then all is mine, what he hath done, what he hath suffered is mine, the benefit of all is mine, what he hath is mine, his prerogatives and priviledges to be the Son of God and heire of Heaven and the like, all is mine, why? himselfe is mine, union is the foundation of communion. So it is here with the Church, I am my Beloveds, my person is his, my life is his, to glorifie him, and to lay it downe when he will, my goods are his, my reputation his, I am content to sacrifice all for him, I am his, all mine is his: so you see there is union and communion mutually betweene Christ and his Church. The Originall and spring hereof is Christs uniting and communicating himselfe to his Church first, the spring begins to the streame, what hath the streame or cesterne in it, but what is had from the spring; first we love him, because he loved us first. It was a true speech of *Augustine*, *Quicquid bonum*, &c, whatsoever is good in the world or lovely it is either God or from God, it is either Christ or from Christ, he begins it: it is said in nature, love descends, the father and the mother love the child before the child can love them, love indeed is of a fiery nature, onely here is the dissimilitude, fire ascends, love descends, it is stronger descending from the greater to the lesse, then ascending up from the

1 John 4.19.

the meaner to the greater, and that for this,

Amongst other reasons, *Because the greater person lookes upon the lesser as a peece of himselfe*: sees himselfe in it, the father and mother see themselves in their childe: so God loves us more then we can love him, because he sees his image in us; neither is there only a priority of order, he loves us first, and then wee love him, but also of causality, he is the cause of our love, not by way of motive onely, hee loves us, and therefore from an ingenious spirit we must love him againe, but he gives us his Spirit, circumciseth our hearts to love him: for all the motives or morall perswasions in the world without the Spirit cannot make us love, we are taught of God to love one another, our brethren whom we see daily, saith *Paul*, much more need we to be taught to love him whom we never saw, so that his love kindles ours by way of reflection.

Why the magnanimity of the greater stoopes in love to the lesser.

Deut. 30.

1 Thes. 4 9.

In the New-Covenant, God works both parts, his owne and our parts too, our love to him, our feare of him, our faith in him, hee works all, even as he shewes his own love to us.

That in the new Covenant God works both parts.

If God love us thus, what must we doe? meditate upon his love, let our hearts be warmed with the consideration of it, let us bring them to that fire of his love, and then they will wax hot within us, and beg the Spirit, Lord thou hast promised to give thy Spirit to them that aske it, and to circumcise our hearts to love thee, and to love one another, give thy holy

How to have our hearts warmed with the love of God.

1 Sal. 39.

Luk. 11.

Serm. XIX.

That this confidence of the Church implies

1. *Propriety.*

Spirit as thou haſt promiſed.

In a word theſe words, *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine*, to joyne them both together, they imply a mutuall propriety, Chriſt hath a propriety in me, and I in Chriſt peculiar propriety, Chriſt is mine, ſo as I have none in the world ſo mine, whom have I in Heaven but Chriſt, and what is there in earth in compariſon of him, he is mine, and mine in a peculiar manner, and I am his in a peculiar manner, there is propriety with peculiarity.

2. *Love.*

Then againe theſe words I am his, implies mutuall love, all is mutuall in them, mutuall propriety, mutuall peculiarity and mutuall love, I love Chriſt ſo as I love nothing elſe, there is nothing above him in my heart, as Chriſt loves me more then any thing elſe (ſaith the Church) and every Chriſtian: he loves all, and gives outward benefits to all, but to me he hath given himſelfe, ſo love I him. As the husband loves all in the family, his cattell and his ſervants, but he gives himſelfe to his Spouſe. So Chriſt is mine, himſelfe is mine, and my ſelfe am Chriſts, he hath my ſoule, my affections, my body, and all, he hath a propriety in me and a peculiarity in me, hee hath my affection and love to the uttermoſt, as I have his, for there is an entercourſe in theſe words.

3. *Familiarity.*

Then againe, they imply mutuall familiarity, Chriſt is familiar to my ſoule and I to Chriſt,

he

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he discovers himselfe to me in the secret of his love, and I discover my selfe to him in prayer and meditation, opening my soule to him upon all occasions. Gods children have a spirit of prayer, which is a spirit of fellowship, and talkes (as it were) to God in Christ; It is the language of a new borne Christian, he cries to his Father, there is a kinde of familiarity betweene him and his God in Christ, who gives the entrance and accesse to God, so that where there is not a kinde of familiarity in prayer and opening of the soule to Christ upon all occasions, there is not this holy communion. Those that are not given to prayer, they cannot in truth speake these words, as the Church doth here, *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine*, for they imply sweet familiarity.

Then againe they imply mutuall likenesse one to another, he is mine and I am his, the one is a glasse to the other, Christ sees himselfe in me, I see my selfe in him, for this is the issue of spirituall love, especially that it breeds likenesse and resemblance of the party loved in the soule that loveth: for love frameth the soule to the likenesse of the party loved, I am his, I resemble him, I am his, I have given my selfe to him, I carry his picture and resemblance in my soule, for they are words of mutuall conformity. Christ out of love became like me in all things, wherein I am not like the Divell (that is sinne excepted) if he became like me, taking my nature that I might be

4. *Mutuall likenes*

That love frameth the soule to the likenesse of the party loved.

beneare him in the fellowſhip of grace, *My Beloved is mine*, I will be as like him as poſſible I can, I am his, every Chriſtian carries a character of Chriſts diſpoſition as farre as weakneſſe will ſuffer, you may know Chriſt in every Chriſtian, for as the Kings coyne carries the ſtamp of the King, *Cæſars* coyne beares *Cæſars* ſuperſcription. So every Chriſtian ſoule is Gods coyne, and he ſets his owne ſtampe upon it, if wee bee Chriſts, there is a mutuall conformitie betwixt him and us.

Now where you ſee a malitious, uncleane, worldly ſpirit, know that is a ſtampe of the Divell, none of Chriſts, he that hath not the Spirit of God is none of his, now where the Spirit of Chriſt is, it ſtamps Chriſts likeneſſe upon the ſoule, therefore we are exhorted, *Phil.* 2.5. to be like minded to Chriſt.

Mutuall care of one anothers good.

Againe, theſe words, *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine*, imply a mutuall care that Chriſt and the ſoule have one of the good of another, of each others honour and reputation, as Chriſt hath a care of our good; ſo a Chriſtian ſoule (if it can ſay with truth and ſincerity I am Chriſts) it muſt needs have care of Chriſts good, of his children, Religion and Truth.

What Chriſt hath to care for in the world.

What? will ſuch a ſoule ſay, ſhall Chriſt care for my body, ſoule and ſalvation, and ſtoope to come from Heaven to ſave me, and ſhall I have no care for him and his glory? hee hath left his truth and his Church behind him,

and

and ſhall not I defend his truth and ſtand for the poore Church to the utmoſt of my power againſt all contrary power? ſhall not I ſtand for Religion? ſhall it be all one to me, what opinions are held? ſhall I pretend he cares for me, and ſhall I not care for that I ſhould care for; Is it not an honour to me that he hath truſted me to care for any thing that he will be honoured by my care, Beloved it is an honour for us that we may ſpeake a good word for Religion, for Chriſts cauſe, for his Church againſt maligners and oppoſers, and we ſhall know one day that Chriſt will be a rewarder of every good word: where this is ſaid in ſincerity, that Chriſt is mine and I am Chriſts, there will be this mutuall care.

A mutuall complacency or reſting love.

Likewiſe there is implyed a mutuall complacency in theſe words, by a complacency I meane a reſting, contenting love, Chriſt hath a complacency and reſting in the Church, and the Church hath a ſweet reſting contentment in Chriſt; Chriſt in us and we in him. A true Chriſtian ſoule that hath yeelded up its conſent to Chriſt, when it is beaten in the world, vexed and turmoiled, it can rely on this, I have yet a loving husband, yet I have Chriſt.

What we ſhould retire to and do in afflictions.

Let this put us upon a ſearch into our ſelves, what we retire to when we meete with afflictions, thoſe that have brutiſh and beaſtly ſoules retire to carnall contentments, to good fellowſhip, forget, beſot, and fly away from themſelves

selves their owne consciences and thought of their own trouble, whereas a soule that hath any acquaintance with God in Christ or any interest into Christ, so that it may say, that Christ is mine and I am Christs, there will be contentment and rest in such a soule, whatsoever it meetes with in the world.

7. *Is courage in owning Christs cause with resolution, for the Church is resolute.*

The last thing implyed is courage, a branch of the former, say all against it what they can, saith the resolved soule, I will be Christs, here is courage with resolution, agreeable hereto is that, *Isa.* 44.5. One shall say I am the Lords, and another shall call himselfe by the name of *Iaacob*, another shall subscribe and surname himselfe by the name of *Israel*. Where there is not this resolution in good causes, there is not the Spirit of Christ, there is no interest into Christ, it is but a delusion and selfe-flattery to say I am Christs, when there is not resolution to stand to Christ, these words are the expression of a resolved heart, I am, and I will be Christs, I am not ashamed of my bargaine, of the consent I have given him, I am and I will be his. You have the like in *Micah* 4.5. All people will walke every one in the name of his god, they will resolve on that, and we will walke in the name of the Lord our God for ever and for ever: so that where these words are spoken in truth, that I am Christs, there is necessarily implyed, I will owne him and his cause for ever and ever.

Mica. 4.5.

He hath married me for ever and ever, there-

fore

fore if I hope to have interest in him for comfort for ever and ever, I must be sure to yeeld my selfe to him for ever and ever, and stand for his cause in all oppositions against all enemies whatsoever. These and such like places in Scripture runne parralell with this in the text, *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine*, not onely holding in the person, but in the cause of Christ. Every man hopes his god will stand for him against the Divell who accuseth us daily: if we will have Christ to stand for us and to be an advocate to pleade our cause (as he doth) in Heaven, we must resolve to stand for him against all enemies, Heretiks, Schismaticks, Persecutors whatsoever, that we will walke in the name of our God for ever and ever.

But when the case is not thus with us, and that neither we can feele comfort from Christ, nor have this assurance of his love to us, what should we judge of such? *Quest.*

We should not wonder to see poore soules distempered when they are in spirituall desertions, considering how the Spouse cannot endure the absence of Christ, it is out of love, therefore in the deepest plunge she hath this in her mouth, *my Beloved*. Therefore let us not judge amisse of our selves or others, when we are impatient in this kind. *Sol.* *That we should not wonder to see distemper in desertion.*

But for a more full answer, in want of feeling of the love of Christ in regard of that measure we would (for there is never altogether a want

want of feeling) there is ſo much as keepes from deſpaire alway, yet if we carry a conſtant love towards him, mourne to him and ſeeke after him, as the Church here: if the deſire of our ſoules be after him, that we make after him in the uſe of meanes, and are willing to ſpeake of him, as the Church here, feele or feele not we are his, and he will at length diſcover himſelfe to us.

Cauſes, why God abſents himſelfe from his children.

Let ſuch drooping ſpirits conſider, that as he will not be long from us, nor wholly: ſo it ſhall not be for our diſadvantage that he retires at all, his abſence at length will end in a ſweet diſcovery of himſelfe more aboundantly then before, he abſents himſelfe for our good, to make us more humble and watchfull for the time to come, more pitifull to others, more to prize our former condition, to juſtifie the waies of God more ſtrictly, to walke with him, to regaine that ſweet communion which by our negligence and ſecurity we loſt, when we are thus prepared by his abſence, there inſues a more ſatisfying diſcovery of himſelfe then ever before.

When uſually Chriſt returnes after deſertion to the ſoule

But when is the time that he comes, compare this with the former Chapter, he comes after long waiting for him, the Church waited for him, and waited in the uſe of all meanes, ſhe runs to the Watchmen, and then enquires after him of *the daughters of Ieruſalem*, after this ſhe finds him. After we have waited and expected Chriſt in the uſe of meanes, Chriſt at length will diſcover

discover himselfe to us, and yet more immediately it was after the Church had so deservedly exalted him in such lofty praises, *This is my Beloved, the chiefe of tenne thousand, he is altogether lovely:* When we set our hearts to the high exaltation of Christ above all things in the world, proclaiming him *the chiefe of tenne thousand*, this at the last breeds a gratious discovery, *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine*, for Christ when he sees us faithfull and so loving that we will not endure his absence, and so constantly loving, that we love him notwithstanding some discouragements, it melts him at the last as, *Ioseph* was melted by his brethren.

I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine.

That in order of nature Christ is ours first, though in order of knowing it is not so.

In the words you see a mutuall interest and owning betweene Christ and the Church, howsoever in the order of words, the Church saith, *I am my Beloveds* first, yet in order of nature, Christ is ours first, though not in order of discovery, there is one order of knowing and another order of causing, many things are knowne by the effect, but they issue from a cause; I know he is mine, because I am his, I have given my selfe to him, I know it is day, because the Sunne is up, there is a proofe from the effect: so I know a man is alive, because he walks, there is a proofe of the cause by the effect, I am his, I have grace to give my selfe up to him, therefore I know he loves me, he is mine, thus I say in order of discovery, but in order

order of nature he is first mine, and then I am his, *My Beloved is mine and I am my Beloveds.*

The Union and Communion betwixt us and Christ hath beene already spoken off.

Now to speake of the branches, *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine.* That Christ is first ours, and then we are his because he is ours, and the wondrous comfort that issues hence, that Christ himselfe is ours.

How Christ comes to be ours

1.

By his owne & his Fathers gift

2.

By his Spirit.

How comes Christ to be ours, Christ is ours *by his Fathers gift;* God hath given him for us. Christ is ours by his owne gift, he hath given himselfe for us.

And Christ is ours by his Spirit that witnesseth so much to our spirits, for the Spirit is given for this purpose, to shew us all things that are given us of God, whereof Christ is the chiefe, therefore the Spirit of Christ tels us that Christ is ours, and Christ being ours, all that he hath is ours.

If he be ours, if we have the field, we have all the treasures in the field, if we have him, we have all his, he was borne for us, his birth was for us, he became man for us, he was given to death for us, and so likewise he is ours in his other estate of *exaltation,* his rising is for our good, he will cause us to rise also, and ascend with him, and sit in heavenly places, judging the world and the Angells. We recover in this second, what we lost in the first *Adam.*

Vse. 1. Consolation.

This is a point of wondrous comfort to shew the riches of a Christian, his high estate, that Christ is his.

And

And Christ being ours, God the Father and the Holy Spirit and all things elſe in the world, the rich promiſes are ours: for in Christ they are all made, and for him they ſhall be performed, for indeed he is the chiefe promiſe of all himſelfe, and all are yea and amen in him. Can we want righteouſneſſe, while we have Chriſts Righteouſneſſe, is not his garment large enough for himſelfe and us too? is not his obedience enough for us? ſhall we need to patch it up with our owne righteouſneſſe? he is ours, therefore his obedience is ours. 2 Cor. 1.20.

Vſe. 2. *Contentation.*

And this ſhould be a ground likewiſe of contentation in our condition and ſtate whatſoever, Chriſt himſelfe is ours. In the dividing of all things, ſome men have wealth, honours, friends and greatneſſe, but not Chriſt, nor the love of God in Chriſt; and therefore they have nothing in mercy: but a Chriſtian he hath Chriſt himſelfe, Chriſt is his by faith and by the Spirits witneſſe, therefore what if he want thoſe appendencies, the leſſer things, he hath the maine, what if he want a riveret, a ſtreame, he hath the ſpring, the ocean, him in whom all things are, and ſhall he not be content. Put caſe a man be very covetous, yet God might ſatisfie him, what ſhould anxious thoughts diſquiet us. When we have ſuch bils, ſuch obligations from him who is faithfullneſſe it ſelfe, when a Chriſtian cannot ſay, honour favour, or great perſons are his, yet he can ſay, he hath that that is worth all, more then all, Chriſt is his.

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Object.

Answ. *Why sometimes wee want outward things being in Christ.*

O may some say, this is but a speculation, Christ is yours, a man may want and be in misery for all that, no it is a reality, Christ is ours, and all things else are ours, he that can command all things is mine, why then doe I want other things? becauſe he ſees they are not for my good, if they were he would not with-hold them from me, if there were none to be had without a miracle, no comfort, no friends, he could and would make new out of nothing, nay out of contraries, were it not better for me to be without them.

Vſe. 3. *Exhortation to ſtudy the excelleny of Christ.* John 17. ult.

That you may the more fully feed on this comfort, ſtudy the excellencies of Chriſt in the Scripture, the riches and honour that he hath, the favour he is in with his Father, with the interceſſion that he makes in Heaven, ſtudy his mercy, goodneſſe, offices, power, *&c.* and then come home to your ſelves, all this is mine, for he is mine, the love of God is mine, God loves him and therefore he loves me, becauſe we are both one, he loves me with the ſame love that he loves his Sonne, thus we ſhould make uſe of this, that Chriſt is ours. I come to the ſecond,

I am my Beloveds.

1 Iohn. 4. 19. This is a ſpeech of reflection, ſecond in nature, though firſt in place and in diſcovery to us, ſometimes we can know our owne love, when we feele not ſo much the love of Chriſt, but Chriſts love muſt be there firſt, *I am my Beloveds.*

How

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How are we Christs Beloved, we are his first of all by his Fathers gift, for God in his eternall purpose gave him for us, and gives us to him, as it is in the excellent prayer, *Iohn* 17. Father thine they were and thou gavest them me. I had not them of my selfe first, but thine they were before all worlds were, thou gavest them me to redeeme them, and my Commission doth not extend beyond thy gift; I die for all those that thou gavest me, I sanctifie my selfe for them that they may be sanctified, so we are Christs in his Fathers gift, but that is not all, though it be the chiefe fundamentall principall ground of all.

How we come to be and are in Christ beloved.

1. *By his Fathers gift.*

For we are his likewise by Redemption, Christ tooke our nature, that hee might die for us to purchase us. We cost him deare, we are a bloudy Spouse to Christ, as that froward woman wrongfully said to *Moses*, thou art a bloudy husband unto me, so Christ may without wrong say to the Church, thou art a Spouse of bloud to me. We were indeed to be his Spouse, but first he must win us by conquest in regard of Satan, and then satisfie justice, we were in such debt by sinne, lying under Gods wrath, so as till all debts were paid, we could not in the way of justice be given as a Spouse to Christ.

2. *By Redemption.*

Exod. 4. 25.

Nor is this all, but we are Christs by Marriage also, for when he purchased us, and paid so deare for us, when he died and satisfied divine justice, he did it with a purpose to marry us to himselfe, we have nothing to bring him but

3. *By Marriage.*

but debt and misery, yet he tooke upon him our nature to discharge all, that he might marrie us, and take us to himselfe, so we are his by Marriage.

4. By consent.

Then againe we are his by Consent, we have passed our selves over unto him, he hath given himselfe to us, and we have given our selves to him back againe. To come to some Use of it, if we be Christs as Christ is ours,

Vse 1. Consolation against wants.

First it is a point of wondrous comfort, God will not suffer his owne to want, he is worse then an Infidell that will suffer his Family to perish; when we are once of Christs Family, and not onely of his Family, but of his body, his Spouse. Can we thinke he will suffer us to want that which is needfull?

2. Against all Satans accusations.

Then againe, as it comforts us against want, so it likewise fenceth us against all the accusations of Satan, I am Christs, I am Christs, if hee have any thing to say, loe we may bid him goe to Christ, if the Creditor comes to the wife, she is not liable to pay her owne debts, but saith, goe to my husband; so in all temptations learne hence, to send Satan whither he should be sent, when we cannot answer him, send him to Christ.

3. For the time to come.

And for the time to come, what a ground of comfort is this, that we are Christs as well as he is ours; what a plea doth this put into our mouthes for all things that are beneficiall to us, Lord I am thine, save me (saith the Psalmist) why? save me, because I am thine, I am thine,

Lord

Lord teach me and direct me. The husband is to direct the Spouse, the head should direct all the senses: All the treasures of wisedome are in Christ, as all the senses are in the head for the good of the body, all fullnesse dwells in him, therefore pleade with him, I want wisedome, teach me and instruct me how to behave my selfe in troubles, in dangers, in feares; if it be an argument strong enough amongst men (weake men) I am thine, I am thy child, I am thy Spouse, *&c.* Shall we attribute more pitty and mercie to our selves then to the God of mercy and comfort, who planted these affections in the creature? Shall hee make men tender and carefull over others, and shall not he himselfe be carefull of his owne flock? doe wee thinke that hee will neglect his Jewels, his Spouse, his Diadem and Crowne? he will not. Isa 62. 3.

But you will urge experience, we see how the Church is used even as a forlorne widdow, as if she had no husband in the world, as an Orphan that had no Father; therefore how doth this stand good.

Answer 1. *That the sufferings both of the Church and particular persons is especially for conformity with Christ the head.*

The answer is, all that the Church or any particular Christian suffers in this world, it is but that there may be a conformity betweene the Spouse and the Husband. The Head wore a Crowne of thornes, and went to heaven and happinesse through a great deale of misery and abasement in the world, the lowest that ever was: And it is not meet that the Church should go to heaven another way.

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2. To fashion her to be like Christ

Then againe, all this is but to fashion the Spouse to be like to Christ, but to bring the Church and Christ neerer together, that is all the hurt they doe, to drive the Church neerer to Christ then before, Christ is as neere to his Church as ever in the greatest afflictions by his Spirit, Christ cries out on the Crosse, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me*; it is a strange voice, that God should be his God, and yet notwithstanding seeme to forsake him. But God was never more his God then at that present; indeed he was not his God in regard of some feelings that he had enjoyed in former times, he seemed to bee forsaken in regard of some sence, as Christ seemes to forsake the Church in regard of some sence and feeling, but yet his God still. So the Church may say, I am thine still, though she seeme to be forsaken in regard of some feelings, yet she is not deserted in regard of Gods care for support of the inward man and fashioning to Christ. The Church hath never sweeter communion with Christ, then under the greatest crosses, and therfore they many times have proved the ground of the greatest comforts, for Christ leades the Church into the wilderneſſe, and then speakes to her heart, *Hosea* 2.14. Christ speakes to the heart of his Spouse in the wilderneſſe, that is, in a place of no comfort, there are no Orchards or pleasures, but all discomforts, there a man must have it from heaven, if he have any good in the wilderneſſe. In that wilderneſſe that

That though Christ seeme absent in affliction, yet he is never more gratiously neerer then then.

That the sweetest Communion with Christ is under the greatest crosses.

that is in a desolate disconsolate estate; Christ speakes to the heart of his children, there is in the wilderness oftentimes a sweet intercourse of love incomparably beyond the time of prosperity.

Againe, to stay your hearts, know this will not be long, as we see here the Church seemed to be forsaken and neglected, fell into the hands of cruell Watchmen, and was faine to goe through this and that meanes, but it was not long ere she met with him whom she sought after. It may be midnight at this time, but the night continues not long, it will be morning ere long. Therefore the Church may well say, *Rejoyce not against me O mine enemy*, as it is *Micah* 7. For though I be fallen I shall rise againe, though I sit in darkness, the Lord will bee a light unto me. It shall not be alway ill with the Church, those that survive us shall see other manner of daies then we see yet (whatsoever we shall our selves) Hence we have also an Use of triall; Whosoever are Christs, they have hearts to give themselves to him, as hee gives himselfe, not his goods or his honours, but himselfe for his Church. So the Church gives her selfe to Christ, my delight is in him, he hath my selfe, my heart, my love and affection, my joy and delight, and all with my selfe, if I have any honour, he shall have it, I will use it for his glory, my riches I will give them to him and his Church and Ministery and Children, (as occasion shall serve). I am his, therefore

Micah 7.8.

Triall if or not wee bee Christs by giving our selves over to him to bee ruled by him.

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That after wee have given our selves to Christ it is an easie matter to part with all things unto him.
2 Cor. 8. 5.

fore all that I have is his if he aske it at my hands. It is said of the *Macedonians*, they gave themselves to Christ, and then their riches and goods, it is an easie matter to give our riches to Christ when wee have given our selves rst. A Christian as soone as ever he becomes a Christian, and ever after to death and in death too, he gives up himselfe to Christ: they that stand with Christ, and will give this or that particular, will part onely with idle things that they may spare, are they Christs, No, a Christian gives himselfe, and all his to Christ: so we see here what we should doe if Christ be ours, let us give up our selves to him, as it is *Rom.* 12. the issue of all that learned profound discourse in the former part of the Epistle that Christ justifieth us by his righteousnesse and merit, and sanctifies us by his Spirit, and hath predestinated and elected us and refused others, is this, *I beseech you, Give up your bodies and soules, and all as a living Sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God.*

That the Churches confidence implies renuntiatiõ & resignation in a deepe sence.

In briefe these words imply renunciation and resignation, *I am his*, that is I have given up my selfe to him, therefore I renounce all others that stand not with his love and liking. I am not onely his by way of service, which I owe him above all that call for it, but I am his by way of resignation, if he will have me dye, I will dye, if he will have me live heere, I will, I have not my selfe to dispose of any longer, I have altogether alienated my selfe from

from my ſelfe, I am his, to ſerve him, his to be diſpoſed off by him, I have renounced all other.

Therefore here we have another anſwer to Satan, if he come to us and ſolicite us to ſinne, let the Chriſtians heart make this anſwer, I am not mine owne, what hath Satan and his inſtruments to doe with me? is my body his to defile, is my tongue his to ſweare at his pleaſure, ſhall I make the temple of God the member of an harlot? (as the Apoſtle reaſons) ſhall I defile my veſſell with ſinne? What ſaith converted *Ephraim*, *Hoſea* 14.8. *What have I any more to doe with Idols, for I have ſeene and obſerved him.* We ought to have ſuch reſolutions ready in our hearts: indeed when a Chriſtian is reſolute, the world counts ſuch to be loſt, hee is gone, we have loſt him, ſay your diſſolute profane perſons It is true they have loſt him indeed, for he is not his owne, much leſſe theirs any longer, but he is found to God and himſelfe, and the Church, thus we ſee what ſprings from this, that Chriſt is ours, and that we are Chriſts backe againe. Let us carry this with us even to death, and if times ſhould come that God ſhould honour us by ſerving himſelfe of us in our lives, if Chriſt will have us ſpend our blood, conſider this I am not mine owne in life nor death, and it is my happineſſe that I am not my owne, for if I were mine owne what ſhould I doe with my ſelfe, I ſhould looſe my ſelfe as *Adam did*. It is therefore my happineſſe that I am not mine owne, that I am not the

Anſw. an anſwer to Satan againſt diſpaire or ſin in temptation.

1 Cor. 6. 15.

That it is our exceeding happines that now we are not our owne.

the worlds, that I am not the Divells, that none elſe hath to doe with me, to claime any intereſt in me, but I am Chriſts, if I doe any thing for others, it is for Chriſts ſake. Remember this for the time to come, if there be any thing that wee will not part with for Chriſts ſake, it will be our bane, we ſhall looſe Chriſt and it too. If we will not ſay with a perfect Spirit, I am his, my life, my credit, my perſon is his, any thing his, looke what we will not give for him, at length we ſhall looſe and part with it and him too.

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7 AP 53

The end of the nineteenth Sermon.

THE TWENTIETH SERMON.

Cant. VI. II.

I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine, he feedeth among the Lillies.

THE Church you see here, though she stood out a while against all Christs invitation and knocking, yet at length shee is brought to yeeld herselfe up wholy unto Christ, and to renounce her selfe, which course God takes with most, yea in a manner with all his people

the worlds, that I am not the Divells, that none elſe hath to doe with me, to claime any intereſt in me, but I am Chriſts, if I doe any thing for others, it is for Chriſts ſake. Remember this for the time to come, if there be any thing that wee will not part with for Chriſts ſake, it will be our bane, we ſhall looſe Chriſt and it too. If we will not ſay with a perfect Spirit, I am his, my life, my credit, my perſon is his, any thing his, looke what we will not give for him, at length we ſhall looſe and part with it and him too.

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7 AP 33

The end of the nineteenth Sermon.

THE TWENTIETH SERMON.

Cant. VI. II.

I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine, he feedeth among the Lillies.

THE Church you see here, though she stood out a while against all Christs invitation and knocking, yet at length shee is brought to yeeld herselfe up wholy unto Christ, and to renounce her selfe, which course God takes with most, yea in a manner with all his people

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people ere they goe out of this world to lay all high things low, beate downe every high thought and imagination, which exalteth it selfe against him, that they may give themselves and all they have to Christ, if he call for it, for he that doth not so is not worthy of Christ, if we doe not this at least in preparation of minde, let us not owne the name of Christians, least we owne that which shall further increase and aggravate our condemnation, professing religion one way, & yet alienating our minds to our lusts and pleasures of the world another way, to have peculiar love fits of our owne distinct from Christ, how stands this, with, *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine*, how stands it with the self resignation that was spoken off before.

2 Cor. 10. Luk 14. 26.

Reasons of selfe resignation to Christ being perswaded that he is ours.

Now this followes upon apprehension of Christ being ours, *I am my Beloveds, because my Beloved is mine first*, there are foure reasons why Christ must be given to us, before wee can give our selves to him by this selfe resignation.

1. *Because he is the chiefe spring of all good affections*, which he must plant in us, loving us, ere we can love him, 1. *Ioh.* 4. 10, 19.

2. *Because love descends*, though it be of a fiery nature, yet in this it is contrary, for love descends, whereas fire ascends, the superiour first loves the inferiour, Christ must descend in his love to us, ere we can ascend to him in our affections.

3. *Because our nature is such that wee cannot love*

love but where we know our ſelves to be loved firſt, therefore God is indulgent to us herein, and that we may love him he manifeſts his love firſt to us.

4. *Becauſe naturally our ſelves being conſcious of guilt are full of feares from thence: ſo that if the ſoule be not perſwaded firſt of Chriſts love, it runnes away from him, as Adam did from God, and as Peter from Chriſt: depart from me for I am but a ſinneſull man* So the ſoule of every man would ſay if firſt it were not perſwaded of Gods love in Chriſt, who amongſt us ſhall dwell with the everlaſting burning, therefore to prevent that diſpoſition of ſoule, which would riſe out of the ſence of guilt and unworthineſſe, God firſt ſpeakes to us in Chriſt; at length ſaying unto our ſoules, *I am thy ſalvation*, whereupon the ſoule firſt finding his love, loves him backe againe of whom it finds it ſelfe ſo much beloved, ſo that our love is but a reflection of his, *I am my Beloveds, becauſe my Beloved is mine.* Iſa. 33.

It is with the Spirit of God, as with the ſpirits in the ſoule and body of a man, there is a marriage betwixt the body and ſoule, the ſpirits joyne both together, being of a middle nature, for they have ſomewhat ſpirituall neare the ſoule, and ſomewhat bodily neare the body, therefore they come betweene the body and the ſoule, and are the inſtruments thereof, whereby it workes. So it is with the Spirit of God, the ſame Spirit that tells the ſoule that Chriſt

Christ is ours, the same Spirit makes up the match on our part, and gives us up to Christ againe.

Let this then bee the tryall, that wee are Christs by the spirituall Eccoe that our soules makes to that report which Christ makes to our soules, whether in promises or in instructions.

Vse. 1. Of Instruction.

That faith hath a double worke, as to receive Christ, so to give us backe againe to Christ.

See hence likewise, the nature of Faith: for these are the words of Faith, as well as of love, Faith hath two branches, it doth give as well as take. Faith receives Christ, and sayes, Christ is mine, and the same Faith saith, I am Christs againe. Indeed our soules are empty, so that the maine worke of Faith is to be an empty hand, *Mendica manus*, (as *Luther* calls it) a beggers hand to receive, but when it hath received, it gives backe againe, both our selves and all that we can doe. as 2. *Cor.* 8. 5. the Churches of *Macedonia*, gave themselves, and then they gave their goods. Where Faith is, there will be a giving of our selves and our goods, and (by a proportion) our strength, wits and all backe againe. This discovers a great deale of empty false Faith in the world, for undoubtedly if it were true Faith, there would be a yeelding backe againe.

That the Churches confidence shewes a mutuall counterview of justification and sanctification.

And againe, these words discover the mutuall coherence of *Iustification* and *Sanctification*, and the dependance one upon another, *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine*, Christ is mine, his righteousnesse is mine for my iusti-

fication

cation, I am clothed with Christ, as it is, *Reve.* 12. *The Spouse there is cloathed with the Sunne*, with the beames of Christ: but is that all? No, *I am my Beloveds*, I am Christs, *there is a returne of Faith in Sanctification*, the same Spirit that witnesseth Christ is ours, it sanctifies and alters our disposition, that we can say, I am Christs. It serves to instruct us therefore in the necessary connexion of these two, *Iustification* and *Sanctification*, against the idle slander of *Papists*, that sinnefully traduce that Doctrine, as if we were Solifideans, as if we severed *Iustification* from *Sanctification*. No, we hold here that whensoever Christ is ours, there is a Spirit of Sanctification in us, to yeeld all to Christ, though this resignation bee not presently perfect.

Vse. 3. A direction how to understand the Covenant of grace.

This likewise helps us (by way of Direction) to understand the Covenant of grace, and the Seales of the Covenant, what they inforce and comprise, not onely what God will doe to us, but the duty we are to doe to him againe, though we doe it in his strength. A Covenant holds not on one side, but on both, *Christ is mine, and I am Christs* againe, *I will bee their God*, but they must have grace *to be my people*, and then the Covenant is made up. The Covenant of grace is so called, because God is so gracious as to inable us to performe our owne part.

Instanced in the Seales of the Covenant.

And so in the Seales of the Covenant, in Baptisme, God doth not onely binde himselfe to

to doe thus and thus to us, but binds us alſo to doe backe againe to him. So in the Communion we promiſe to leade a new life, renewing our Covenant, and therefore we muſt not thinke that all is well, when wee have received our maker, though wee continue in a ſcandalous, fruitleſſe courſe of life. No there is a promiſe in the Sacrament, the Seale of the Covenant of grace, to yeeld up our ſelves to God, to returne to Chriſt againe with our duty, then wee come as we ſhould doe, when we come thus diſpoſed. This for direction, *My Beloved is mine and I am my Beloveds.*

Vſe. 4. For Comfort to the weaker chriſtians & to the whole Church.

To proceed to make an Uſe of Comfort to poore doubting Chriſtians, *I am my Beloveds*, is the voice of the whole Church, that all ranks of Chriſtians (if they be true) may without preſumption take up. I have not ſo much Faith, ſo much love, ſo much grace, ſo much patience, as another (ſaith a poore Chriſtian) therefore I am none of Chriſts: but wee muſt know that Chriſt hath in his Church of all rancks, and they are all his Spouſe, one as well as another, there is no exception, there is a little ſpirit of emulation, and a ſpice of envy in Chriſtians that are weaker, if they have not all that great meaſure of grace which they ſee in others, they feare they have none at all, as if there were no Babes in Chriſts ſchoole, as well as men, and growne perſons.

That the nature of Faith is the ſame in the whole Church as in every particular member.

Then againe, we ſee here the nature of Faith in the whole Church, it is the ſame that is in every

every particular, aud the ſame in every particular, as it is in the whole Church. The whole Church ſaith, *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine,* I appropriate him, there is a ſpirit of appropriation in the whole, and there is ſo in each particular. Every Chriſtian may ſay with *Paul, I live by Faith in the Sonne of God, that hath loved me and gave himſelfe for me,* and with *Thomas, my God and my Lord.* Gal. 2.

The ground hereof is, becauſe they are all one in Chriſt, and there is one and the ſame Spirit in the whole Church and every particular Chriſtian, as in pipes, though of different ſounds, yet there is the ſame breath in them. So Chriſtians may have different ſounds from the greater or leſſer ſtrength of grace that is in the one and in the other, but all comes from the ſame breath, the ſame Spirit. The Spirit in the Bride ſaith come, the whole Church ſaith it and every particular Chriſtian muſt ſay it; becauſe as the body is acted by one Spirit and makes but one naturall body, though conſiſting of many parts weaker and ſtronger. So ſhould there be a harmony in this myſticall body acted by that one Spirit of Chriſt, who ſo regards all, as if there were but one, and regards every one ſo, as he doth not forget the whole, *Sic omnibus attentus ut non detentus,* &c. Chriſt ſo attends to all that hee is not deteined from any particular, and he ſo attends every particular that he is not reſtrained from all, there is the ſame love to all as to one, and to every one, as if Reve 22.

if there were no other, hee ſo loves each one that every Chriſtian may ſay as well as the whole Church, Chriſt is mine and I am Chriſts.

In thoſe things that we call *Homogeniall*, there is the ſame nature in each quantity as in the whole, as there is the ſame nature in one drop of water as in the whole Ocean, all is water, and the ſame reſpect of a ſparke, and of all the element of fire. So Chriſt beares the ſame reſpect to the Church as to every particular, and to every particular as to the Church.

Vſe. 3. How to have direction to bee able to ſay with the Church, I am my Beloveds &c.

To come to make an Uſe of *Direction*, how to come to be able to ſay this, *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine?* For anſwer heereto take notice in the firſt place from the dependance, Chriſt muſt be firſt ours before wee can give our ſelves to him, therefore *we muſt dwell in the conſideration of Chriſts love*, this muſt direct and leade our method in this thing. Would we have our hearts to love Chriſt, to truſt in him, and to embrace him, why then thinke what is hee to us? beginne there, nay and what we are? Weake, and in our apprehenſion loſt, then goe to conſider his love, his conſtant love to his Church and children, *whom he loves he loves to the end*, we muſt warme our ſoules with the conſideration of the love of God in him to us, and this will ſtirre up our Faith to him backe againe, *For we are more ſafe in that hee is ours, then that we give our ſelves to him: we are more ſafe in his comprehenaing*

1. *We muſt dwell in the conſideration of Chriſts love to us.*

John. 13. 1.

Gal 4. 9. Phil. 3. 12.

of

of us, then in our clasping and holding of him: as we say of the mother and the childe both hold, but the safety of the child is that the mother holds him; *If Christ once give himselfe to us, he will make good his owne part alway, our safety is more on his side then on ours.* If ever wee have felt the love of Christ, we may comfort our selves with the constancy and perpetuity thereof, though perhaps we finde not our affections warmed to him at all times, nor alike, yet the strength of a Christians comfort lies in this, that first, *Christ is mine*, and then in the second place, *that I am his.* Now (I say) that we may be able to maintaine this blessed tradition of giving our selves to Christ, Let us dwell in the consideration of his love to us, and of the necessity that we have of him, how miserable we are without him, poore, beggerly, in bondage to the Divell, therefore wee must have him to recover us out of debt, and to enrich us. For Christs love carries him foorth not onely to pay all our debts for us, but to enrich us, and *it is a protecting, preserving love, till he brings us to Heaven his owne place, where we shall ever be with him:* The consideration of these things will warme our hearts, and for this purpose serves the Ministrie.

2. *Dwell in the consideration of our misery without Christ, and our necessity to have him.*

We should therefore in the next place attend upon the Word, for this very end. Wherefore serves the Ministrie? Among many others, this is one maine end, *to lay open the unsearchable riches of Christ*, therein you have some-

3. *We must diligently attend the ministry of the Word.*

thing of Christ unfolded, of his Natures, Offices, and benefits we have by him, *Redemption, and freedome, and a right to all things in him,* the excellencies of another world, therefore attend upon the meanes of Salvation, that wee may know what riches wee have in him, this will keepe our affections close to Christ, so as to say, *I am his.*

4. *We must labour every day what we can to contract, draw and to bring all our love to Christ.*

And labour wee also every day more and more to bring all our love to him, wee see in burning glasses, where the beames of the Sunne meete in one, how forcible they are, because there is an union of the beames in a little point. Let it bee our labour that all the beames of our love may meete in Christ, that he may be as the Church saith, our *Beloved, My Beloved is mine and I am my Beloveds* (saith shee) as if the Church had no love out of Christ. And is it love lost? No, but as Christ is the Churches Beloved, so the Church is Christs love againe, as we see in this booke oft, *my Love, my Dove.* As all streames meete in the great Ocean, so let all our loves meet in Christ.

How farre wee may love other things besides Christ.

We may love other things, and we should doe so, but no otherwise then as they convey love to us from Christ, and may be meanes of drawing up our affections unto Christ. We may love our friends (and we ought to doe so) and other blessings of God, but how? No otherwise then as tokens of his love to us: we love a thing that our friend sends to us, O but it is as it doth convey his affection to us. So must we love all

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all things as they come from Gods love to us in Christ.

And indeed whatsoever we have is a love token, even our very afflictions themselves, whom I love, I rebuke and chastise.

That all we receive from Christ, even afflictions are love tokens.

Againe, that we may inflame our hearts with the love of Christ, as we are exhorted by *Iude*, Let us consider the vanity of all things that should entise us from Christ, and labour every day more and more to draw our affections from them, as we are exhorted, *Psalm.*45. *Hearken O daughter and consider, and incline thine eare, forget also thine owne people and thy Fathers house, so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty.* So if we will have Christ to delight in us, that wee may say we are his, let us labour to sequester our affections more and more from all earthly things, that we may not have such hearts, as Saint *Iames* speaketh of, adulterous hearts. O ye Adulterers and Adulteresses know you not that the love of the world is emnity with God.

Wee must preserve our hearts in the love of Christ. Jud. ver. 21.

Indeed there is reason for this exhortation, for all earthly things, they are all vaine and empty things, there is an emptinesse in whatsoever is in the world (save Christ) therefore we should not set our affections too much upon them; *A man cannot be wise in loving any thing but Christ, and what he loves for Christ.* Therefore let us follow that counsell, to draw our selves from our former company, acquaintance, pleasures, delights, and vanities, wee

cannot beſtow our love and our affections better then upon Chriſt. It is a happineſſe, that we have ſuch affections, as joy, delight and love planted in us by God, and what a happineſſe is it, that wee ſhould have ſuch an excellent object to fill thoſe affections, yea to tranſcend and more then ſatisfie them. Therefore the Apoſtle wiſheth that they might know all the demenſions of Gods love in Chriſt, there is a *height, breadth, length, and depth of the love of God.*

Eph. 3. 18.

And let us thinke of the demenſions, the height, breadth and depth of our miſery out of Chriſt. The more excellent our natures are, the more miſerable they are if not changed: for looke what degree of excellency wee have (if it be not advanced in Chriſt) we have ſo much miſery being out of him; therefore let us labour to ſee this, as to value our being in him, ſo to be able upon good grounds to ſay, *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine.*

Againe, let us labour to walke in the light of a ſanctified knowledge to bee attained by the Goſpell, for as it is, 1. *Iohn* 1.3. *the end of all our preaching is to aſſure Chriſt to the ſoule,* that we may be able to ſay without deceiving our owne ſoules, *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine.* All preaching (I ſay) is for this end, the terrour of the Law and the diſcovery of corruption is to drive us out of our ſelves to him, and then to provoke us to grow up into him more and more. Therefore

1 Iohn 1.3.
1 Iohn 5.13.

The maine end of preaching.

ſaith *Iohn*, *All our preaching is that wee may have fellowſhip with the Father and the Sonne, and they with us:* And what doth he make an evidence of that fellowſhip, *walking in the light, as he is light*, or elſe wee are lyers; hee is bold in plaine tearmes to give us the lye, to ſay wee are Chriſts, and have communion with the Father and the Sonne, when yet wee walke in darkeneſſe, in ſinnes againſt conſcience, in willfull ignorance, the darkeneſſe of an evill life, wee have no communion with Chriſt; therefore if we will have communion with him, let us walke in the light, and labour to be lightſome in our underſtandings, to have a great deale of knowledge, and then to walke anſwerable to that light and revelation that we have. Thoſe that live in ſinnes againſt conſcience, and are friends to the darkeneſſe of ignorance, of an evill life, Oh they never thinke of the fellowſhip with Chriſt and with God, theſe things are meere riddles to them, they have no hope of them, or if any, their hope is in vaine, they barre themſelves of ever having comfortable communion with Chriſt here, much leſſe ſhall they enjoy him hereafter in Heaven.

1 Joh. 1. 7.

Therefore labour every day more and more to grow rich in knowledge, to get light and to walke in that light: to which end pray with the holy Apoſtle, *Epheſ* 1. *That you may have the Spirit of Revelation*, that excellent Spirit of God to reveale the things of God, that wee

may have the light discovered to us.

The excellency of a Christian walking in divine light above others.

What a world of comfort hath a Christian that hath light in him and walks in that light, above another man, whether he live or dye, the light brings him into fellowship with the Father of lights, he that hath this light knowes his condition and his way, and whither hee goeth, when he dyeth he knowes in what condition hee dyeth, and upon what grounds. The very light of nature is comfortable, much more that of grace, therefore labour to grow daily more and more in the knowledge and obedience of the light.

A serious exhortation for such who are not yet in Christ, to come in.

All professors of the Gospell are either such as are not Christs, or such as are his, for such as are not yet, that you may be provoked to draw to fellowship with Christ, Do but consider you are as branches cut off, that will wither and dye, and be cast into the fire, unlesse you be grafted into the living stock, Christ, you are as naked persons in a storme not cloathed with any thing to stand against the storme of Gods wrath, let this force you to get into Christ.

That in the Gospell Christ by the Ministery offereth himselfe unto all.

And next for incouragement consider, Christ offereth himselfe to all in the Gospell and that is the end of the Ministrie to bring Christ & our soules together, to make a spirituall marriage, to lay open his riches and to draw you to him, if you confesse your sinnes he will forgive them, and you shall have mercy, *He relieves those that are wearied and heavy laden*, and bids those come to him that are thirsty, *Christ*

1 Iohn 1.9. Prov. 28. Mat. 11 ult. Isa. 55.1.

came

came to seek, and to save that which was lost, Christ offers himselfe in mercy to the worst soule.

Therefore if there be any that have lived in evill courses, in former times, consider that upon repentance all shall bee forgotten, and as a mist scattered away and cast into the bottome of the Sea. Christ offers himselfe to you, these are the times, this is the houre of grace, now the water is stirring for you to enter: doe but entertaine Christ, and desire that hee may bee yours to rule you and guide you, and all will be well for the time to come.

Doe not object I am a loathsome creature full of rebellions. Object

Christ doth not match with you, because you are good, but to make you good, Christ takes you not with any dowry, all that hee requires is to confesse your beggery and to come with emptinesse. He takes us not because we are cleane, but because he wil purge us, he takes us in our bloud when hee first takes us. Let none despaire either for want of worth or of strength, Christ seeth that for strength we are dead, and for worth, we are enemies, but hee gives us both spirituall strength and worth, takes us neare to himselfe and enricheth us. Let none therefore bee discouraged, it is our office, thus to lay open and offer the riches of Christ, if you will not come in, but love your sinnefull courses more then Christ, then you perish in your blood, and wee free our hands, and may free our soules from the guilt thereof, therefore as you love your owne Answ. Ezek. 16. Ephe. 5. 27.

owne ſoules, come in at length and ſtand out no longer.

Exhortation to them that have given themſelves to Chriſt

And for thoſe that have in ſome meaſure given themſelves up to Chriſt, and can ſay, *He is mine and I am his*, let them goe on with comfort, and never bee diſcouraged for the infirmities that hang about them. For one part of Chriſts Office is to purge his Church by his Spirit more and more, *Epheſ.* 5.27. not to caſt her away for her infirmities, *but to waſh and cleanſe it more and more till it bee a glorious Spouſe like himſelfe.* For if the husband will by the bond of nature, beare with the infirmities of the wife (as the weaker veſſell) doth not Chriſt binde himſelfe by that which hee accounts us bound? Is there more love and mercy, and pittie in us to thoſe that we take neere us, then there is in Chriſt to us? What a moſt blaſphemous thought were this to conceive ſo? Only let us take heed of being in league with ſinne, for we cannot give our ſoules to Chriſt, and to ſinnefull courſes too; Chriſt will allow of no bigamy or double marriage where hee hath any thing to doe, wee muſt have ſingle hearts, reſolving though I fall, yet I purpoſe to pleaſe Chriſt, and to goe on in a good converſation, and if our hearts tell us ſo, daily infirmities ought not to diſcourage us, wee have helpes enough for theſe. Firſt, Chriſt bids us aske forgiveneſſe, and then we have the mercy of Chriſt to beare with weaker veſſels, then his Advocation, he is now in heaven to pleade for

us:

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1 Ioh 2. 2.

That to suffer and to facilitate all duties we should labour more and more for the love of Christ.

us: if we were perfect, we needed not that office; let none be discouraged therefore, but let us labour more and more that we may bee able to comprehend in some measure the love of Christ, so will all duties come off sweetly and easily, and then we shall be enabled to suffer all things, not onely willingly, but cheerefully, and rejoyce in them. Love is of the nature of fire, which as it severeth and consumeth all that is opposite, all drosse and dregs, and dissolves coldnesse, so it quickens and makes active and lively, it hath a kinde of constraining force, a sweet violence, (as the Apostle saith) *the love of Christ constraineth*, 2 Cor. 5. 24.

Let a man that loves the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, be called to part with his life, he will yeeld it as a Sacrifice with comfort. Come what will, all is welcome when wee are inflamed with the love of Christ, and the more we suffer, the more we finde his love, for hee reserves the manifestation of his love most for times of suffering, and the more we finde the manifestation of his love, the more wee love him backe againe, and rejoyce in suffering for him, that we love so, whether they be duties of obedience, active or passive, doing or suffering, all comes off with abundance of cheerefullnesse and ease, where the love of Christ is, that the soule can say, *I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine:* nothing in the world is able to make such a soule miserable. It followes.

He

He feedeth among the Lillies.

Queſt. The Church here ſhewes where Chriſt feeds. But the queſtion is, *Whether it bee the feeding of the Church and People that is here meant, or whether he feeds himſelfe.*

Anſw. For anſwer, hee both feeds his Church among the Lillies, and delights himſelfe to be there; the one followes the other, eſpecially it is meant of the Church, thoſe that are his, he feeds them among the Lillies,

How.

What meant by Chriſts feeding among the Lillies. Lillies are ſuch kinde of flowers as require a great deale of nouriſhment, and grow beſt in valleys and fat ground, therefore when ſhee ſaith, *he feedes among the Lillies*, the meaning is, *he feedes his Church and people in fat paſture*; as ſheepe in ſuch grounds as are ſweet and fruitfull, ſuch are his holy Word and the Communion of Saints, theſe are eſpecially the paſtures wherein hee feeds his Church. The holy truths of God are the foode of the ſoule, whereby it is cheriſhed and nouriſhed up to life everlaſting. This whole Booke is a kinde of Paſtorall (to underſtand the word a little better) a Song of a Beloved concerning a Beloved, therefore Chriſt in many places of this Booke, he takes upon him the terme and carriage (as it were) of a loving Shepheard, who labours to finde out for his ſheepe the fatteſt, fruitfulleſt, beſt and ſweeteſt paſtures, that they may

may grow up as Calves of the Stall, as it is *Malachy* 4.2. that they may grow and be well liking.

You have (to give light to this place) a phraſe ſomewhat like this, where he followes the point more at large, *Cant.* 1.7. the Church there praiesto Chriſt. *Tell me O thou whom my ſoule loveth, where thou feedeſt, where thou makeſt thy flocks to reſt at noone.* Thoſe that are comming up in the Church deſire to know with whom they may joyne, and what truths they may embrace. *Tell me where thou feedeſt and where thou makeſt thy flocke to reſt at noone:* that is in the greateſt heate and ſtorme of perſecution, as at noone day the Sun is hotteſt: *For why ſhould I be as one that turnes aſide by the flocks of thy companions?* that is, by thoſe that are not true friends, that are falſe ſhepheards, why ſhould I be drawne away by them? I deſire to feed where thou feedeſt among thy ſheepe. Why ſhould I be as one that turnes aſide by the flocks of thoſe that are Emulators to thee? as *Antechriſt* is to *Chriſt:* thus the Church puts forth to Chriſt, whereunto Chriſt replies, verſe 8. *If thou know not O thou faireſt among women, goe thy way forth by the footſteps of the flocks, and feed thy kids beſide the Shepheards tents:* that is, if thou know not, goe thy way forth, get thee out of thy ſelfe, out of the world, out of thy former courſe, put thy ſelfe forward, ſtay not complaining, goe on, put thy ſelfe to endeavour, goe thy way forth, whither? *in the footſteps of the flocks,*

Cant. 1. 7.

flocks, see the steps of Christians in the best times of the Church in former times, tread in the steps of those that lived in the best ages of the Church; *feed thy kids*, thy Christians, *besides the Shepheards tents*, the best shepheards; marke where the Apostles and Prophets fed their sheepe, there feed thou, and marke the footsteps of the flock that have lived in the best times, for of all times since the Apostles and Prophets, we must follow those Virgin best times. All Churches are so farre true Churches as they have Consanguinity with the Primitive, Apostolicall and Propheticall Churches.

Therefore *we are now to goe out by the footsteps of the flock*. Marke the footsteps of former Christians, *Abraham*, *Moses*, and *David*, and in Christs time, of *Iohn*, *Peter*, and the rest, blessed Saints, walke as they walked, goe their way, and *feed your selves by the shepheards tents*: marke the shepheards where they have their tents. So these words have reference to the *Propheticall*, especially to the *Evangelicall* times, whereunto we must conforme our selves, for the latter times are Apostate times, after a certaine season the Church kept not her purity, which the Scriptures foretold directly, that we should not take scandall at it, the Church did fall to a kind of admiration of Antichrist, and embraced doctrines of divels; therefore now we must not follow these companies that lead into by-paths, contrary to the Apostolicall wayes, but see wherein our Church agrees with the Apostolicall

1 Tim. 4.

ſtolicall Churches and truth, and embrace no truth for the food of our ſoules, but that wee finde in the Goſpell. For Antichriſt feedes his flockes with winde, and with poyſon, and with empty things. For what hath beene the food in Popery? ſweet and goodly titles, as if they poore ſoules had the beſt Paſtors in the world, when as they adminiſter to them nothing but that which will be the bane of their ſoules, full of poiſon and fraud. This is ſpoken to unfold that place which gives light to this, ſpoken off the paſtorall care of Chriſt, *he feedes his flocke among the Lillies*, plentifully and ſweetly. From hence may bee briefly obſerved, firſt,

That Chriſt feedes as well as breeds.

Obſerv. *That wee neede feeding as well as breeding in Chriſtianity.*

And we have need of feeding as well as breeding: where doſt thou feed? that is, build up thy children, and goe on with the worke begun in them. We have need to be fed after wee are bred, and Chriſt (anſwerable to our exigence and neceſſity) he feeds as well as breeds, and that Word which is the ſeede to beget us, is that which feeds too. What is the ſeed of the new Birth, the Word of God, the holy Promiſes they are the ſeed, the Spirit mingling with them, whereby a Chriſtian is borne, and being borne is cheriſhed and bred, therefore, *As new borne babes*, ſaith the Apoſtle, 1. *Pet.* 2.1. *deſire the ſincere milke of the Word, that you may grow thereby.* So that the ſame thing is both the ſeede of a Chriſtian, and that which

1 Pet. 1.23.

which breeds him, the blessed truth and promises of God.

Quest. *If you aske, why wee must grow up and bee fed still?*

Answer 1. *In regard of daily new guilt.* Doe but aske your owne soules, whether there be not a perpetual renewing of corruption, which still breakes out into new guilt every day. Therefore we have need to feed every day anew upon the promises, upon old promises with new affections, somewhat breakes out ever and anon which abaseth the soule of a Christian, that makes him goe with a sharp appetite to the blessed truthes that feede his soule.

Ans. 2. *Because wee need much strength.* And then againe, we need a great deale of strength, which is mainetained by feeding, besides the guilt of the soule, there needs strength for duety, which must be fetched from the blessed Word of God, and the comforts thence, whereby we are able to withstand and resist, to stand and doe all that we do.

Ans. 3. *In regard variety of temptation needs variety of wisdome* And *then we are set upon by variety of temptations within and without, which require variety of wisedome and strength,* all which must be gotten by feeding, and therefore you see a Christian for his subsistance and being, hath need of a feeding, cherishing, and maintaining still by the sweet and blessed directions and promises out of the Word of God.

A refutation of their error who sleight religious walking with God and the exercises of religion. Therefore you may see what kinde of Atheisticall creatures those are, and how much they are to be regarded that turne off all with a *compendium*

pendium in Religion, tuſh if we know that we muſt love God above all, and our neighbour as our ſeves, and that Chriſt dyed for all: we know enough, more then we can practiſe, they thinke theſe *Compendiums* will ſerve the turne, as if there were not a neceſſity of growing ſtill further and further in diſtinct knowledge. Alas the ſoule needs to be fed continually, it will ſtagger els and be unſufficient to ſtand againſt temptation or to performe duties.

A ſecond generall point out of the text is this, *That as Chriſt feedeth ſtill his flocke and people, ſo hee feedes them fully, plentifully, and ſweetly among the Lillies.* There are ſaving truthes enough, there is an all-ſufficiency in the Booke of God, what need we goe out to mans inventions, ſeeing there is a fullneſſe and all-ſufficiency of truth there. Whatſoever is not in that is winde, or poiſon, in the Word is a full kind of feeding. In former times when they had not the Scriptures, and the comforts of them to feed on, what did the poore ſoules then? and what doe thoſe remaining in Popery feed on? Upon ſtones (as it were.) There was a dreame of an holy man in thoſe times (divers hundred yeares agone) that he ſaw one having a deale of manchet to feed on, and yet all the while poore wretch he fed on ſtones. What folly and miſery is this, when there are delicate things to feed on, to gnaw upon ſtones? and what is all the ſchoole learning almoſt, (except one or two that had better

better ſpirits then the reſt) but a knawing upon ſtones, barren diſtinctions, empty things, that had no ſubſtance in them? they had the Scriptures (though they were locked up in Latine, an unknowne tongue) they had the ſweete paſtures of Chriſt to feede in, and yet all this while they fed (as it were) on ſtones.

Our happineſſe to bee borne under ſuch plenty of ſpiritual food

This ſhould ſhew us (likewiſe) our owne bleſſedneſſe that live in theſe times wherein the ſtreames of the Goſpell runne abundantly, ſweetly and pleaſantly. There is a fullneſſe among us (even in the ſpirits of the worſt ſort) there is a fulneſſe almoſt to loathing of that heavenly Mannah: but thoſe ſoules who ever were acquainted with the neceſſity of it rather finde a want then a fullneſſe, and ſtill deſire to grow up to a further deſire, that as they have plentifull meanes, ſo they may have plentifull affections after, and ſtrength by thoſe meanes: let us know our owne happineſſe in theſe times. Is it not a comfort to know where to feed and to have paſtures to goe to, without ſuſpition of poyſon? that we may feed our ſelves with comforts fully without feare of bane, or noyſome mingling of *Coloquintida* in the pot, which would diſreliſh all the reſt? to know that there are truths that we may feede on ſafely. This the Church in the former place, *Cant.* 1. 6, 7. accounted a great priviledge, *Oh ſhew mee where thou feedeſt at noone*, In the greateſt heat of perſecution, that I may feed among them;

ſo

so then it is a great priviledge to know where to feed, and so to be esteemed, that thereby we may be stirred up to be thankfull for our owne good, and to improove these priviledges to our soules comfort.

But the second branch that must be touched a little, is, *That there is fulnesse no where but in Gods house, and that there and there onely is that which satisfieth the soule with satnesse and sweetnesse.* *Observ.*

Nay not onely the Promises but the very rebukes of Scripture are sweet, the rebukes of a friend, they feed the soule, for we have many corruptions which hinder our Communion with God, so that a Christian delights to have his corruptions rebuked; for he knowes if he leave them, he shall grow into further communion with Christ, wherein stands his happinesse in this world, and the fulnesse of his happinesse in the world to come. *That the rebukes of Scripture are sweet*

If this be so, let us know then, that when we come to Religion we loose not the sweetnesse of our lives, but onely translate them to a farre more excellent and better condition, perhaps we feede before upon vaine Authors, upon (as it were) gravell, vaine company, but now we have our delight (and perhaps finde more pleasure) in better things, instead of that which fed our idle fansie (vaine treatises and the like) now we have holy truths to delight our soules, *Beleeve it, a Christian never knowes what comfort is to purpose till he be downe right*

and ſincere in Religion. Therefore *Auſtine* ſaith of himſelfe, *Lord I have wanted thy ſweetneſſe over long, I ſee all my former life* (that I thought had ſuch ſweetneſſe in it) *was nothing at all but huskes, empty things; now I know where ſweetneſſe is, it is in the Word and Truth.* Therefore let us not miſconceive of Religion, as of a mopiſh and dull thing, wherein we muſt looſe all comfort, if we give our ſelves over to the ſtudy therof; muſt we ſo? muſt we looſe our comfort? Nay, we have no comfort till we be religious indeed; Chriſt feeds not his among Thornes and Briers and ſtinking weeds, but among Lillies; doſt thou thinke he feeds thee among unſavoury, harſh, fretting, galling things? No, *he feeds among Lillies.* Therefore when thou commeſt to Religion, thinke that thou comm.ſt to comfort, to refreſh thy ſoule, let us make uſe of this for our ſoules comfort to make us in love more with the waies of Chriſt.

How Chriſt the true ſhepheard feeds, is further explained.

Now to ſeale this further, ſee what the Scripture ſaith in ſome paralell places, *Pſal.23. The Lord is my Shepheard,* and what is the uſe that *David* preſently makes hereof? *Why, I ſhall want nothing,* hee will feed me plentifully and aboundantly, the whole *Pſalme* is nothing but a commenting upon that word, *the Lord is my Shepheard,* how doth he performe the duty of a ſhepheard, *He makes me to lye downe in greene paſtures and leads me by the ſtil waters,* it is not only meant of the body, but of the ſoule chiefly,

he

he reſtoreth my ſoule, that is, when my ſoule languiſheth and is ready to faint, he reſtores it, and gives me as it were a new ſoule, he refreſheth it. We ſee ſay recreation is the creating of a thing a new, ſo he reſtores my ſoule, he gives me my ſoule a new with freſh comforts: Thus the bleſſed Shepheard doth, and how? Becauſe, *he feedes among the Lillies*, the promiſes of the Goſpell; then hee doth not onely doe good to the body and ſoule, but hee guides all our waies, all our goings out, *Hee leads us in the paths of Righteouſneſſe*, and why, becauſe I deſerve ſo much at his hands? No; for his owne name ſake, becauſe hee hath a love to me, becauſe he hath purchaſed me with his blood, and given his life for his ſheepe, hath bought me ſo deare, though there bee no worth in me. He goes on, though *I walke through all temptations and troubles*, which are as *the valley of the ſhadow of death*, that is (where there is nothing but diſconſolation and miſery) *yet I will feare none ill, thou with thy rod and ſtaffe doſt comfort me.* If I, as a wandring ſheep, venture to goe out of the way, thou out of thy care being a ſweete and loving Shepheard wilt pull me in with thy hooke and ſtaffe againe, he hath not care onely to feed us, but to governe us alſo. What a ſweet Shepheard and Saviour have we in covenant that deales thus with us, and ſo he proceeds, *thou wilt prepare my table in the preſence of mine enemies*, and for the time to come hee promiſeth himſelfe as much

much that God as he hath beene a Shepheard (for the present) to provide all things necessary for body & soule and guidance, so surely the goodnesse of the Lord shall follow me all the daies of my life, for he is a perpetual Shepheard, he will not leave us till he hath brought us to Heaven. Thus we see in this place the sweete care of Christ.

The like place you have, *Isa.* 40. 11. *Hee shall feed his flocke like a Shepheard, he shall gather the Lambs with his armes and carry them in his bosome, and shall gently leade those that are with young*: So he leads them into the pastures and feeds them plentifully and sweetly, not onely with sweet things, but with a tender care, which is sweeter. As a Shepheard he takes into his bosome the poore lambs that cannot walke themselves, and the sheepe that are heavy with young, he cares for them, *he gently leads them* that are poore, weak. Christians that struggle and conflict with many temptations and corruptions, Christ hath a tender care of them, he carries them (as it were) in his bosome and in his armes, and leads them gently: for indeed all Christs sheep are weake, every one hath somewhat to complaine off, therefore he hath a tender care, he feeds them tenderly and sweetly, or else they might perish.

Another place (notable for this purpose) see *Ezek.* 34. 14. wherein you have the same metaphor from a loving Shepheard, and it is but

but a comment upon the text, therefore being paralell places they may helpe our memories: *I will feed them in good pastures upon the high mountaines of Israel, there shall their fold be, there shall they lye in a good fold and in a fat pasture, I will feed my flocke and cause them to lye downe, saith the Lord God, I will seeke that which is lost, and bring backe that which was driven away, I will bind up that which was broken, and strengthen that which is sicke, and destroy the fat and the strong and feed them with judgement.* Those that are Christs true sheepe have somewhat to complaine of, either they are sicke, or broken, or driven away, somewhat is amisse or other, but Christs care preventeth all the necessities of his sheepe, he hath a fit salve for all their sores: And (to apply this to the businesse in hand) doth not Christ feede us *among the Lillies*, doth he not now feede us with his owne body and blood in the Sacrament? would you have better food? *My body is meate indeed, and my blood is drinke indeed*, that is, it is the onely meate (with an *Emphasis*) the onely meate and drinke that our soules could feed upon, God gave his Sonne to death to shed his blood for my sinnes. What would become of the hunger bitten, thirsty soule that is stung with Satan and his temptations, were it not for the blood of Christ to quench our thirst, and the body of Christ given by the Father to death for sinne, were it not that the soule could think upon this, where were the comfort of the

soule? All this is represented to us heere in the Sacrament, we feed on the body and blood of Christ spiritually, and are refreshed thereby, as verily as our bodies are refreshed with the bread and wine. For God doth not feede us with empty symbolls and representations, but with things themselves, that the soule which comes prepared by Faith, is partaker of Christ crucified, and is knit to him though now in Heaven; there is as sure an union and communion betweene Christ and the Christian soule, as there is betweene the food and the body when it is once digested.

Therefore let us come to this blessed, to this sweet food of our soules with hungry appetites, and thankfull hearts, that God hath given us the best comforts of his Word, and fed us with the sweet comforts of the Sacraments, as a Seale of the Word. Wee should even spend our lives much in thankfullnesse to God for this, that he will feede us so sweetly, that thinkes nothing is good enough for our food, but his owne selfe with his owne gracious Word and Truth. Thus wee should bee very thankfull unto God, and now at this time labour to get hungry appetites fit for this blessed food to receive it.

How to get hungry appetites to the Sacrament.

How shall we do that?

1. *To thinke seriously of former and present sins*

Think seriously of the former part of thy life, and this weeke past. For Christ (the food of the soule) delisheth wel with the sowre hearbs of Repentance. Let us stirre up in our hearts

Repentance

Repentance for our ſinnes, and ſorrow in the conſideration of our owne corrupt nature and life, and when we have felt our corruptions and have the ſenſe of our want, then Chriſt will be ſweet to us, the *Paſchall Lamb* was to bee eaten with ſowre hearbs, ſo Chriſt our Paſſeover muſt be eaten with Repentance.

2. *There muſt bee purging.*

Then withall there muſt be purging, there are many things which clogge the ſtomacke; come not with worldly, wicked, malicious affections which puffe up the ſoule, *But lay aſide* (as the Apoſtle wiſheth) *all guile, malice, and ſuperfluity*, empty the ſoule of all ſinne and preposſeſſing thoughts or affections.

Iam 1. 21. 1 Pet. 2. 1.

3. *Conſider the neceſſity of ſpirituall ſtrength.*

And then conſider the neceſſity of ſpirituall ſtrength that we have need to grow up more and more in Chriſtianity to be feeding ſtill, we have need of ſtrong Faith and ſtrong aſſurance that Chriſt is ours, and that we are his. Let us often frequent this ordinance, and come prepared as we ſhould, and we ſhall finde Chriſt making good his owne ordinance in his owne beſt time: ſo as we ſhall bee able to ſay in truth of heart experimentally and feelingly with the Church; *My Beloved is mine and I am his he feedeth among the Lillies.*

FINIS.

7 AP 53

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